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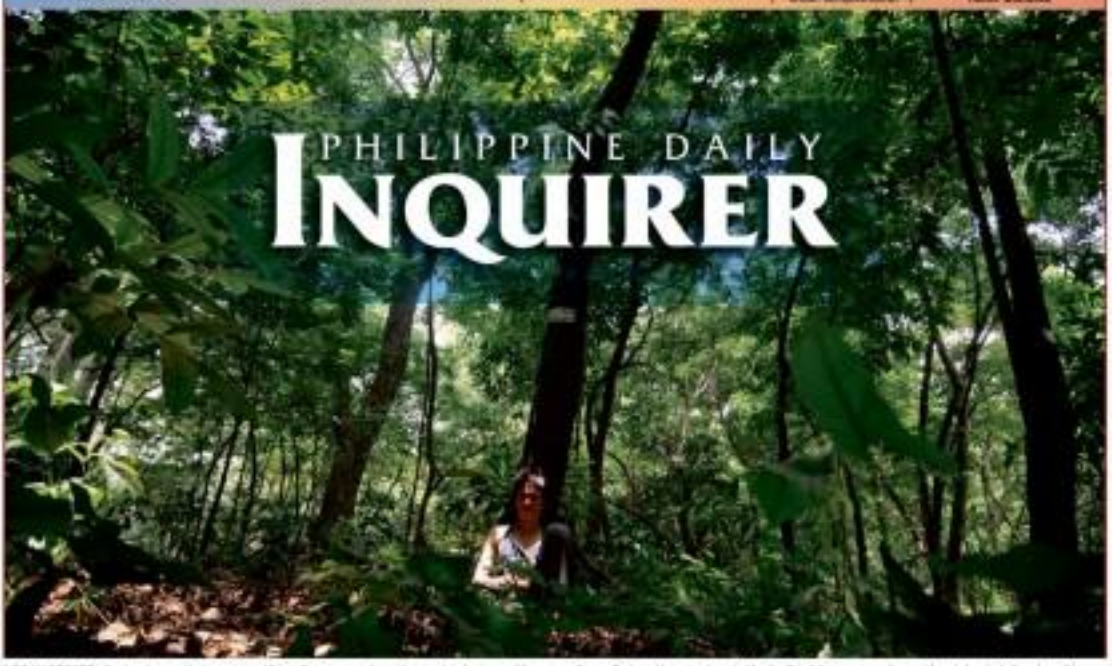

URBAN FOREST During the world observance of Earth Day, a man takes refuge under the trees of Arroceros Forest Park amid searing heat in Manila. The 2.2-hectare park, considered the city's "last lung," is home to about 60 tree species and a small population of birds belonging to six different species. YOSHIKO N. ARIO

Earth Day marked by protests

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon
and Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

PROTESTS marked Earth Day on Sunday, with environmentalists in Pampanga painting the faces of President Aquino and other officials on trees set to be cut for a road expansion.

In Panay, the event saw the culmination of a 322-kilometer caravan against mining on the island. The caravan passed by 48 towns and three cities—nine towns in Aklan, 10 towns and a

DAYS2 A19

Catholic priest hailed as environmental hero / A19

From metal scraps to art pieces

By Romulo O. Perez
Southern Luzon Bureau

SAN PABLO CITY—Mario A. Mallari Jr., 46, did not finish his architecture course, as he married early and worked as a draftsman to be able to raise his six children.

It never occurred to him that he had talent for sculpture. He

FROM METAL A13

Scarborough belongs to PH, old maps show

Documents back claim, says solon

By Michael Lim Ubac

OLD MAPS dating back to Spanish colonial times may hold the key to the claim of the Philippines to Scarborough Shoal.

Known as "Bajo Scarboro," the shoal now called Panatag by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), has been part of the known world since 1734, when European cartographers began to map the world in an age of conquest.

In fact, Bajo Scarboro appeared on a map of the "Archipelago Filipino" as a constituent part of Sambales (Zambales province) in a topographic map of the country "drawn under the direction of

SCARBOROUGH A4

EUROPEAN cartographers named Scarborough Shoal as "Bajo Scarboro" in this 1820 map from the book "Mapping the Philippines: The Spanish Period."

AFP: War games not directed at China

By DJ Yap

THE ARMED Forces of the Philippines yesterday shrugged off Beijing's warning that military exercises between Filipino and US forces could lead to a confrontation with China.

On the 12th day of a standoff at Panatag Shoal, Maj. Emmanuel Garcia said China had no reason to feel concerned about the annual Balikatan (shoulder-to-shoulder) exercises that started a week ago.

The AFP's spokesperson for Balikatan said in a radio interview that the two-week event, which features naval drills and humanitarian activities, was not in any way related to the impasse in an area known internationally as Scarborough

AFP1 A11

Hackers bring PH-China dispute to cyberspace

By Christine O. Avendaño

OUTNUMBERED in terms of warships, warplanes and ground troops, the Philippines wants no war with China, even in cyberspace.

After hackers from both sides defaced each other's websites, clandestine the two countries' conflicting claims over Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, President Aquino's deputy spokesperson Abigail Valte yesterday urged both Filipinos and Chinese to

HACKERS A10

POLKAVARO Inquirer editor in chief Letty Magsanoc (second, from left) gives the newspaper's Excellence Award to Sarah Isabelle Pasia during the graduation ceremony of the UP CMC. (Story on Page A13.)

Pinoy soldiers amazed at modern US weapons

By Armand Galang
Inquirer General Luzon

FORT MAGSAYSAY, Palayan City—It was the first time in his six years as a soldier that Pfc. Ronael Gragasin had joined the Balikatan exercises—and the sight of new weapons and gadgets used by American soldiers amazed him.

One weapon that Gragasin said impressed him was the Americans' M-249 rifle, with a powerful range of 750 meters, making it far superior to the Philippines' M-16 rifle, which has a range of 360 meters.

Gragasin gave his impressions of the latest American weaponry after taking part in live-fire exercises at a Special Forces hill here on Saturday.

"We were able to apply the

PINOY1 A13

China, Russia open naval exercises / A17

NEWS
Solons: Who's afraid of axing GMA? / A2

SPORTS
Texters, Llamados open PBA title series tonight / A29

LEARNING
My Dream Interview contest deadline is on April 27 / G1

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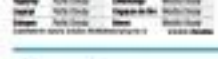

Comelec denies P-Noy request to register ARMM voters anew

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE COMMISSION on Elections (Comelec) has rejected Malacañang's proposal of a general reregistration of voters in the five provinces that make up the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), except in Maguindanao.

In an interview with reporters, Comelec Chair Sixto Brillantes Jr. said the commissioners decided to an en banc meeting last week to deny President Aquino's wish to amend the existing voters' list and order a new general registration as part of electoral reforms in the ARMM.

There are at least 1.71 million registered voters in the region based on the 2010 barangay balloting.

"We did not allow it," said Brillantes, adding that they only agreed to clean the slate in Maguindanao because of an existing petition to junk the voters list in the province.

Brillantes said it was a "case-to-case" basis in the other provinces, where a petition for reregistration may be filed for a particular area where alleged irregularities transpired.

Mr. Aquino had aired the need for electoral reforms in the ARMM when he urged Congress to pass legislation postponing the August 2013 ARMM elections synchronizing them with the national midterm and congressional elections next year.

Last month, the President asked the Comelec to hold a reregistration of voters in the ARMM using biometric machines to remove a credible 2013 poll in the region.

Under the biometrics system, the election body would store match data to check if voters had double or multiple registrations.

Before the en banc decision, Brillantes had hinted that the election body was not inclined to proceed with a general registration because "it would be difficult to meet the timeline."

But his part, Commissioner Rene Sarmiento said the poll body had discovered roughly 130,000 double and multiple registrants in the ARMM.

"Our elected officers and senior directors there have already cleaned the list," said Sarmiento. The new list contains some 181,000 registrants, he added.

He also said that almost 384,000 residents of the region had yet to register under the biometrics system.

Graft court to get more magistrates

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice (DOJ) has given its nod to a legislative measure that would increase the number of justices in the Sandiganbayan antigraft court.

In a position paper, Justice Secretary Leila de Lima signed with Sen. Teofisto Guingona III, author of Senate Bill No. 3111, that the antigraft court needed more justices to ensure the speedy resolution of graft cases.

However, De Lima said a study was needed to determine exactly how many additional judges would be needed.

Guingona has proposed a three-fold increase in the appointment of 30 more magistrates to the 14-member tribunal.

De Lima said the Senate must get the opinion of Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Francisco Villaruz and other justices of the antigraft court to determine the appropriate number of new magistrates.

"While there is a need to increase the number of associate justices in the Sandiganbayan, a thorough study should be made to determine how many associate justices are still needed," De Lima said.

She said a study should also be conducted to see how many Sandiganbayan divisions should be created for the Visayas and Mindanao.

But the justice secretary objected to a provision in the bill which would allow the designation of only one justice – instead of three – as hearing officer and member of the division.

Since the Sandiganbayan is a trial court, De Lima said the presence of three justices during hearings was necessary "to enable them to render the right decision." Marlon Ramos

IT WAS ALL WORTH IT...

---I accompanied my father for his treatment in China and had felt the miraculous minimal invasive treatment

Ely Salim Henry, was a successful professional manager in human resource management in Indonesia. At 68, he was still at his prime and could even do things men his age couldn't do. But in 2008, he was diagnosed with cancer in the tonsil of the lung. It was a painful discovery and everything seemed to have caved in on me. He never was prepared for this. Father was the head of the family and my little brother was still going to college during that time.

The first thing we thought of was to find the best possible treatment for him. I accompanied my father to the Jakarta Offices of Guangzhou Medical Cancer Hospital for a consultation. There we told the doctor of our worries and anxieties because since the stage of my father was diagnosed with breast cancer, and had gone through so many treatments. Despite all that, she eventually left us. I remembered that during the period of that treatment, her skin had changed to color black, resulting us all in panic with her conditions. However, we were assured by the consultant in the office that there are number of minimal invasive treatments and advanced medical equipments available which suit the patients conditions. He explained how Guangzhou handles its patients which eventually restored all my doubts and relieved us to decide with continuing that my father would be treated in China.

While at Guangzhou Hospital, my father undergone 4 systematic minimal invasive treatment. As a result, the 4.5cm lesion had shrunk and could not be seen by naked eye. The nurses of my father were trained, thanks to the miraculous contribution of minimal invasive treatments: Cryotherapy, Radioactive particle seed implantations, Intravenous Chemotherapy, and The immunotherapy. It was a success! The PET/CT scan showed that the tumor was already under control with no recurrence and metastasis.

I could only know a sigh of relief remembering what we went through. I had to leave all my kids back home in order to accompany my father to Guangzhou Maidew Cancer Hospital in China for his treatment. The personal physician of my father also did the same thing. But with this happy turn of events, it was all worth it.

I remembered the time when my father was admitted to the hospital, there were only two floors of ward for cancer patients, but now it has already developed into four to five floors of wards. The hospital likewise regularly organizes activities for cancer patients and carers to get together, such as singing, swimming, shopping, and travel around, for the patients to feel comfortable during their stay in the hospital. The patient's stay at Guangzhou Maidew Cancer Hospital is truly one of kind due to why cancer patients continue to flock the hospital.

Now, everything is again back to normal for my father. With his black thick hairs, tone, and glowing countenance. Here's not a bit of trace of what he underwent. He has resumed his jobs in Indonesia. He went here regularly. Once in a while he organizes gatherings at his house and invites cancer patients, to share his experiences with them. He encourages them to fight and refuse to give up because that was exactly what he did.

If you have experience such matters concerning cancer treatments and has inquiries kindly call 8328 333, 09.05.4625.24, 0922-8000333 or visit Unit A-B2E, 4/F Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Website: www.asianoncare.com

Ecotourism future bright, says P-Noy

By Norman Bordadora

THE FUTURE of Philippine ecotourism looks bright in part because of a tourist experience that may be likened to going back in time, President Aquino said on Saturday night.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Puerto Princesa Underground River (PPUR) as one of the New Seven Wonders of Nature, Mr. Aquino said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Tourism (DOT) are working together to promote other ecotourist sites.

"You know, I had the chance to explore the Puerto Princesa Underground River myself. It was an amazing experience. Journeying down a subterranean river through a subterranean cave system is like traveling back in time," he said in a speech at the Esplanade in Pasay City.

Open invitation

"With walls and caverns that have been shaped by the elements and extraordinary formations of stalactites and stalagmites, the underground river is a true example of the artistry of nature, where it is preserved and cared for by man," he added.

Mr. Aquino said more than 235,000 tourists in 2011 are the bounty and majority of the underground river.

"We do alone cannot do justice to the underground river—one must experience it firsthand to be able to understand exactly why it is one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature. So consider this as an open invitation to everyone to visit the PPUR," he said.

"And we are hoping that even more of you will arrive, so you can live your advertising value and... Some of people around the world around and here it is my task as Filipinos not to take these blessings for granted. We have to act as responsible stewards."

"And this means valuing our natural resources, and ensuring the environmental sustainability of all our development efforts," he said.

Tourism has long been a "low lying fruit" for the economy as it directly creates opportunities for Filipinos and has an immediate effect on not creating jobs, Aquino said.

"I am told that for each tourist that any host on our shores, one new job is created. Tourist will have travel agents thing their itineraries, tour guides who will show them around and transport who will, hopefully, be able to sell them our locally made delicacies and handicrafts," he said.

So, at the end of the day, the mission of the PPUR, reduced to the secretary just just of those three Puerto Princesa, but ahead all our countrymen across the nation," he added.

Scarborough belongs to PH, old maps show

From page A1

Hidalgo de Arogon on April 11, 1628."

Sen. Edgardo J. Angara, who has a collection of ancient maps of the country, told the Inquirer yesterday that the maps actually disproved the territorial claim of China to the shoal and its surrounding waters, which, he said, had no historical or legal grounds under the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (Unclos).

"It's clear that Scarborough Shoal is part of our geography during the Spanish colonial times," he said. "We have maps (reproduced) from the original, which was made in 1734, 300 years ago time. Zambales is already part of the Philippines."

The DFA has asked Beijing to resolve the dispute through arbitration in the United Nations-backed International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea, but China swiftly rejected this.

As in the dispute over the sprawling islands involving six nations, including the Philippines and China, Beijing has always preferred bilateral, where it has a clear advantage over smaller nations, over a multilateral approach.

But the DFA is standing by its decision to seek international arbitration with or without China.

The manuscript maps can be found in Exhibit 60 in the hardbound book titled, "*Mapping the Philippines: The Spanish Period*," authored by Angara, Jose Ma. A. Cardoso and Isaias P. Nos, and published by the Rizal Encyclopedia Assistance and Development Foundation in September 2009.

The book contains another map, which was published in Madrid in 1875 and republished by the US Department of War in 1899, a year after the Philippines was ceded to the United States in the Treaty of Paris. It bears the description: "This is a general map of the Philippine Archipelago arising from the work of the Hydrographic Commission of the Philippines under the command of Claudio Montero y Gray."

'Mother of all maps'

The 1875 map was the "product of the most comprehensive mapping and charting work in the Philippines having more than 20 years (1849-1875)."

Angara said the original maps were deposited at Spain's Museo Naval de Madrid.

A Jesuit scholar, Pedro Murillo y Velarde, came up with the first "complete map of the Philippines," said the senator. The map later known as the "Murillo Map," which showed all the Philippine territory under Spanish rule, and which became the basis for the Treaty of Paris.

Three original copies of the Murillo Map are kept in Madrid, Paris and Washington, which were parties to the treaty.

For US$20 million, the treaty gave away the Philippines to the United States following the humiliating defeat of Spain in the Spanish-American War, which ended Spain's empire to the American and the Manila and set the stage for US colonial hegemony.

"We have a historic title to a Scarborough Shoal as early as late 17th century. We already have our map, all the cartographic maps subsequent to 1734 were based on the Murillo Map. It was the mother of all maps," Angara said.

Strong evidence

"That should be a strong evidence of our ownership of Scarborough," he said.

He noted that Scarborough Shoal's "extreme proximity" to Zambales, 220 kilometers, compared to China's 300 kilometers, off the coast of China in Hainan province.

Asked whether the maps would establish beyond any doubt the Philippine sovereignty over Scarborough, Angara said: "We can use strong evidence, and we have other pieces of evidence."

Angara, who coauthored Senate Bill No. 2185, which defines the baseline of the Philippine archipelago, said maps had always contested him.

"The fundamental rationale in collecting old maps, I think I was initially attracted in them out of curiosity and because of their age and rarity. Maps define our territory and our sense of nationhood. As a student of history, I realized how maps delineate the line of both the colonized and the colonizers, and how even to this day, the matter of geographic boundaries and the desire to expand or defend these umbrella must of the various in the world," he said.

GOV'T WATCH

Serving and Protecting the Filipino Consumer

AN APPEAL FOR SOBRIETY AMIDST RISING OIL PRICES

The Department of Energy **(DOE)** has admitted that it remains helpless in bringing down skyrocketing oil prices that are likely influenced by movements in the global oil market.

Even the United States has acknowledged **that they cannot do anything** to solve this global problem of fuel prices.

The surge in prices of imported oil has been attributed **to increased political risk mainly in the oil-producing Middle East and North Africa and the growing demand of large economies like China and India.**

Proposals from Philippine lawmakers have included **the removal of 12% VAT on oil, the amendment of the Oil Deregulation Law, and establishing a system of regulation and centralized procurement of oil from the cheapest sources abroad.**

It has already been explained by no less than **PNoy** that **the 12% VAT on oil products will not be lifted** since the government is paying for various social programs as well as subsidizing the following:

- **Transportation Fares of the MRT and LRT** where commuters are charged only about **P15** per passenger from an actual cost of about **P60.**
- **Pantawid Pasada Subsidy Program** worth **P450 million** for jeepney and tricycle drivers which they use to buy fuel.

There is nothing we can do about the increasing world market prices of oil because we are a country heavily dependent on imported oil.

We appeal to our countrymen for sobriety amidst this crisis until another solution is found.

RAUL T. CONCEPCION
Chairman

Your comments or suggestions on this issue are important to us:

Do you *Agree* or *Disagree* that sobriety is the answer amidst rising oil prices? If not, what do you suggest?

GOV'T WATCH would like to get your comments or suggestions on it. Please send your views and comments to GOV'T WATCH via SMS: GOVWATCH 0920-9607777 and SMART 0948-7486888 via email: inbox@GOVTWATCH.net www.govtwatch.net

GOV'T WATCH

P-Noy gives 3 officers first stars

PRESIDENT Aquino has promoted to one-rank the head of the Presidential Security Group (PSG) and two other senior military officers, the Armed Forces of the Philippines announced Saturday.

PSG commander Col. Marco Dizon and Army Scout Ranger Regiment deputy commander Col. Danilo Servando were promoted to brigadier general.

Capt. Manuel Nicolas Alimurung, commander of the Naval Force of the Philippine Fleet, was promoted to commodore.

The AFP said Dizon received his star on April 17. He has been PSG commander since the beginning of President Aquino's term on June 30, 2010.

Dizon was also in the PMA during the term of the President's late mother, former President Corazon Aquino. He was previously commander of the AFP's reserve unit, the Joint Special Operations Group based in Camp Aguinaldo.

Servando's promotion took effect on April 19.

Servando is a former AFP spokesperson and public affairs director in the Department of National Defense.

He belongs to Philippine Military Academy Class 1985.

Alimurung will get his star on April 29.

He is the former deputy commander of Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao. He belongs to PMA Class '82. —Jerna E. Pinlac-Bagaoisan

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Court sides with Chavez vs Firm

CHAVEZ

THE REGIONAL Trial Court of Makati has granted lawyer Frank Chavez's bid to have a damage suit filed against him by the "The Firm" dismissed.

The Villaraza Cruz Marcelo and Angangco law office is better known as "The Firm," so named after a popular late John Grisham legal thriller.

In granting his motion to dismiss, Judge Elmo M. Alameda of Branch 59 charged the law firm with "forum shopping," saying the 30 libel cases it had filed against Chavez would have been brought as a collective and consolidated suit considering that all the parties were supposedly acting for and on behalf of the law firm.

Degrading

The court said in its order dated March 30 that the filing of multiple petitions "constitutes abuse of court processes, which tends to degrade the administration of justice, wreak havoc upon orderly judicial procedure, and add to the congestion of the heavily burdened dockets of the courts."

The court pointed out that "The Firm" also failed to implead in its complaint the author, editor and publisher of the newspaper in which the supposed libelous article was published, as well as the responsible radio and television and cable networks which caused the broadcast of the subject interviews.

Disqualified

The court sustained Chavez's argument that the civil action cannot qualify as an independent civil action because the very rule on independent civil actions bars the plaintiff from recovering damages twice or several times for the same act or omission charged in the criminal action.

The court also questioned the authority of the law firm's equipment representative who allegedly verified the complaint.

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Merits, not grudge, to decide Luisita case–solons

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

LAWMAKERS spearheading the impeachment of Chief Justice Renato Corona said they expect the Supreme Court's final ruling on the issue of compensation for Hacienda Luisita to be based on the "merits" of the case rather on "the grudge" some magistrates hold against the President.

Makilala City Rep. Ruben Quimbo, spokesperson of the prosecution panel against Corona, said the Hacienda Luisita land reform case was "an entirely different matter" from the impeachment trial.

Corona's impeachment trial at the Senate will resume two weeks after the high court's scheduled decision on compensation for the Aquino family for the sugar estate.

Connecting

"The members of the House have always looked at the issue of Hacienda Luisita as separate and independent from the impeachment of Chief Justice Corona. It has only been the Chief Justice himself who has been connecting that issue to the impeachment in his unsuccessful attempt to gain public sympathy. Like with all cases pending before it, we expect the SC to act with independence and competence in deciding the case considering that its decision on compensation for the Aquinos is unappealable," said Quimbo in a text message.

Another spokesperson of the House prosecutors, Aurora Rep. Juan Edgardo Angara, said: "Let's wait for the decision. I don't expect the justices to decide on considerations other than the merits and the evidence in the case."

But Negros reiterated that the Luisita ruling could influence the senator-judges, who might give credit to Corona's claim that the Cojuangcos' refusal to let go of their land without a huge compensation was one of the reasons for his impeachment by the President's allies in the House.

"That is the difference with regular court cases and the impeachment case, because in the latter, the senator-judges have a wider latitude of discretion, so long as their decisions is not arbitrary," said Negros.

Overshadowed

On the other hand, Sabaton party-list Rep. Raymond Palatino lamented that such a landmark agrarian reform decision by the Supreme Court, which has been anticipated for decades, would be overshadowed and tainted by the impeachment trial of Corona.

"It's unfortunate that the promulgation of the decision on the Hacienda Luisita case will take place at a time when there's a bitter conflict between the Chief Justice and the President, for a long time, farmers have been at the losing end in...

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MPIC wins an Anvil

"EAGLE is Up," the environmental program of Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC), recently won an Award of Merit at the 17th Anvil Awards, the "Oscars" of the local public relations industry that held yearly by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP).

"Share it Up," now on its third year, started as e-mail blasts, a Facebook page and website. It now boasts a growing partnership of hundreds of volunteers from both the government and the private sector who have so far submitted two nominations in Patagonia to environmental protection.

MPIC won the Anvil for its environmental conservation and preservation efforts at Limited Islands Nature Park in Manoloo, Pangasinan, where a three-pronged plan to rehabilitate the mangrove forest, seagrass and coral reef ecosystems and reforest indigenous plant species was implemented.

Jose Ma. K. Lim, MPIC president, said that like other companies must responsibly implement programs of the company, "Share it Up" is in line with MPIC's effort to support sustainable development.

"We are one of the few companies that have been able to ensure that there is a good compromise between sustainable development and any issue that may push," Lim said.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday - April 23, 2012
3rd Week of Easter
Georgius / Adalbert

1st Reading: Acts 4:8-15

Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and tremendous signs among the people. Some persons then came forward, who began to dispute with Stephen, but they could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke. In they were unable to face the trials, they bribed some men to say "We heard him speak against Moses and against God."

So they stirred up the people, the elders and the teachers of the Law they took him by surprise, seized him and brought him before the Council. Then they produced false witnesses who said, "This man never stops speaking against our Holy Place and the Law. We have heard him say that Jesus the Nazarene will destroy our Holy Place and change the customs which Moses handed down to us." And all who sat in the Council fixed their eyes on him, and his face appeared to them like the face of an angel.

Gospel: John 6:22-29

The next day the people who had stayed on the other side realized that only one boat had been there and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, rather, the disciples had gone away alone. Boats from Tiberias came near the place where all these people had eaten the bread. When they saw that Jesus was not there nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Master, when did you come here?"

Jesus answered, "Truly, I say to you, you look for me, not because you have seen through the signs, but because you ate bread and were satisfied. Work then, not for perishable food, but for the lasting food which gives eternal life. The Son of Man will give it to you, for he is the one the Father has marked."

Then the Jews asked him, "What shall we do? What are the works that God wants us to do?" And Jesus answered them, "The work God wants is this: that you believe in the one whom God has sent."

Reflection:

When Jesus spoke to today's reading about the "food that the Son of Man gives you" he was speaking (according to most commentators), not yet specifically about the Eucharist, but about his entire "work"—his revelation. But "revelation" can mean a very abstract word, if not opaque to the average person. Commentators say Johannine Jesus, however, is the embodied revelation of the Father. He is, as the first verse of John's gospel puts it, "the Word." (logos in Greek). But in Greek, logos means more than what an everyday word. It means meaning, harmony, inner principle. ... Jesus is all this.

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SSS makes borrowing more fun

By Rutcel W. Domingo

THE SOCIAL Security System (SSS) has increased housing loan limits while fixing and lowering interest rates across the board in an effort to adopt private sector practices and provide competitive offerings to its members.

Emilio de Quiroz Jr., SSS president and CEO, said in a statement that under amended rules on housing loans, individual members can now borrow up to P2 million—double the amount previously allowed.

"The revised guidelines aim to align SSS housing loan programs to current industry practices," De Quiroz said.

"Our longer payment terms and fixed interest rates also make SSS loans competitive to lending facilities offered by other institutions such as banks," he added.

Also, the SSS chief said the pension fund slashed its interest rates by as much as 5 percentage points to help members gain wider access to decent shelter at affordable terms.

Based on the new schedule, a loan of P600,000 carries an interest of 6 percent, down from 9 percent.

Loans of more than P600,000 and up to P1 million earn 9 percent and this rate is no longer subject to review every five years.

In the previous loan schedule SSS members who borrowed to amass between P400,000 and P600,000 paid 13 percent interest, while those who borrowed more than P500,000 up to P1 million paid 14 percent interest.

In both cases, the interest rate could be changed every five years, depending on the history of payments.

Under the new schedule, the SSS is offering loans of more than P1 million and up to P1.5 million, and charging 14 percent interest.

For all new loans, "fixed interest" now means no change for 15 years, although individual loans can go as long as 30 years.

Loans taken out by overseas Filipino workers will have a maximum term of 15 years, while loans to fund apartments, dormitory or home repairs and improvement can go as long as 20 years.

Loans for housing development can extend up to five years, as multi-loans release borrowers are 60 years old at the time of application.

"We also increased the P500,000 limit on home repair and improvement loans to P1 million," De Quiroz said. "Among those who will benefit are members whose homes were damaged by natural calamities and families who want to expand or renovate their houses."

Further, the SSS lowered its 14-percent interest rate to 11 percent for entrepreneurs and developers of subdivisions, condominiums and other residential properties.

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Aquino vows gov't support for ailing electronics sector

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

LAPU-LAPU CITY—President Aquino on Friday lauded the electronics industry for its contributions to the economy despite declining demand for its exports, and promised his administration's "active support" for the industry that has been severely affected by the global slowdown and the effects of the disaster that hit Japan last year.

"My government is determined to meet any challenge that might arise in your (sector) with equal resilience and equal fervor. You can continue to count on my administration's active support for the semiconductor and electronics industries," Mr. Aquino said participants at the World Electronics Forum and Semiconductors and Electronic Industries in the Philippines Inc. (Seipi) general membership meeting in this city.

"Your industry for the past years, job of many, was left reeling from the effects of the disaster that hit Japan, on top of a global economic slowdown that spanned years," the President said, noting that the industry's exports dropped to a 10-percent share of the country's total exports in 2011 from an average share of 65 percent.

"This consolidated on the decline in total merchandise exports, which pulled down the 2011 GDP (gross domestic product) growth rate by an estimated 3.2 percentage points," Mr. Aquino said.

The Philippines provides about 10 percent of the world's semiconductor manufacturing services with products that include mobile phone chips and microprocessors. It is also the site for the manufacture of silicon or electronic products like the anti-lock car braking system, CD-ROM drives, digital signal processing units, printed circuit boards and disk drives.

Despite the decline, the industry's direct employment grew by six percent, from 350,000 in 2010 to 370,000 in 2011, the President said, calling it an encouraging sign.

Mr. Aquino also credited the industry for its innovation, talent sourcing and vision that forged the industry's resilience. "You have been able to thrive, and not merely survive, in the Philippines despite the limitations presented by the business environment, which cannot be separated from the political milieu," he said.

He told the forum that he expected the industry to achieve greater heights as it "builds on the momentum that the country is experiencing right now."

Globally, industry leaders projected bright prospects for the sector.

Seipi chair Jing Viera said the computerized figures for investment in the first two months of the year showed a positive trend.

He said the industry recorded $4.16 billion in investments in January and February 2011, but this during the same period in 2012, investments reached $4.49 billion, an increase of about 7 percent. The bulk of these investments came from the semiconductor subsector, he added.

Viera said the industry is expected to post a major recovery in the next two to three months. Industry leaders said they expect electronics exports to rise from 30 to 35 percent this year despite last year's drop of 20 percent.

Some 200 leaders of the electronics industry from several countries attended the four-day 17th World Electronics Forum.

Ordinary folk to monitor desk deliveries to Mindanao schools

By Tarra Quismundo

ABSNet to ensure the delivery of new furniture to schools in Mindanao in time for the next academic year, a civil society group will help keep an eye on the process, the Department of Education (DepEd) said on Friday.

The DepEd has promised to solve the furniture shortage in Mindanao schools to ensure that the new school year in June.

To ensure that the shortage will be dealt with, the nonprofit group Procurement Watch Inc. is launching Bantay Eskwelahan in Mindanao, which will tap communities to monitor furniture deliveries by the DepEd and its contractors to 100 schools in the region.

The DepEd said the program, introduced in Metro Manila in 2009, would be launched in Davao del Sur and Compostela Valley.

The program's introduction in Mindanao expands its scope outside the pilot sites, including Bukidnon, Tagbilaran City, Bicol, Metro, Quezon City and third province, the DepEd said. The program was initially launched with help from the Australian Agency for International Development.

"We are very pleased with the assistance provided by private and civil society organizations in ensuring that our schools will get their much-needed resources in good quality and on time," Education Secretary Armin Luistro said in a statement.

"This is a critical measure and one that we commend as we are sure we can use to fill massive gaps in the public school system," Luistro added.

Under the program, Bantay Eskwelah will work with the DepEd in monitoring whether contractors are delivering the furniture "in the right time, with the right quantity and of the right quality based on DepEd specifications."

"This new initiative will highlight the importance and success of using school-based monitors in achieving value for money and transparency adopting a participatory approach and in the procurement of school area shares and also school building," the DepEd said.

Bantay Eskwelah will enlist at least 200 volunteers from the school communities for the monitoring effort.

"Even if I don't have money, I give my time to help in my community," Mylene Quijano, a longtime volunteer, said in a statement. "We can't count on (the) government to do everything. It doesn't have enough money or people. We have to help."

Malunggay, yacon cure for infection

LOCAL plants yacon and malunggay have been found to be effective remedies against common skin bacterial infections.

In separate studies conducted at Dr. La Salle Health Science Institute's (DLSHSI) Multidrug Medical Research Center and Dr. La Salle University-Manila, researchers have confirmed the bio plants' stability as antibacterial agents.

Two bioactive compounds in malunggay seeds and a bioactive compound present in yacon leaves were found to be effective against Staphylococcus aureus and Staphylococcus epidermidis, the most common causes of bacterial skin infections.

A group of researchers from DLSHSI, DLSU-Manila and the National Research Institute of Chinese Medicine in Taiwan noted that the compounds in malunggay seeds possess significant activity against the bacteria and have strong potential for development as a new for staphylococcal infections.

The study also found malunggay seeds to be useful against Epidermophyton floccosum and Trichophyton rubrum, two common causes of cutaneous fungal infections, and as a natural remedy for external fungal infections.

In an abstract to be published in the Chinese Journal of Natural Medicines, the researchers said the study on yacon leaves not only "confirmed the plant's therapeutic activity for hose Oceania subsistenced perfumed health benefit claims."

Resilience is key, at Kumaris seminar

"At THE heart of the seminar, said Kumari, lie the face of disagreement, he Buddha. Resilience is strength."

Anthony Stevens—author, educator and international speaker—will conduct an exploration of "The Resilient Mind" (in the World-phase)," an evening of empowering conversations, today, April 23, 6-9 p.m. at the SOS Conference Hall of the Asian Institute of Management, Rockwell and Finance Streets, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

"The resilient mind is a quiet mind," says Stevens, director of the Resilience Research Centers in Geneva, Hungary and Turkey. "That is true freedom because then you are liberated from negativity in all its forms."

Stevens has organized world-loving seminars anchored on spirituality and meditation to 28 countries. He has authored six books and countless essays and released six audio recordings on the subject.

Tomorrow, April 24, he will speak on "Karma" in the Sapphire Ballroom, Shoe's Best, Gateway Mall, Araneta Center, Quezon City, also at 6-9 p.m.

For details, call Ruby at 09228937960 or 09217130083 for the Makati presentation, and Noel at 09243419621 for Gateway.

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Mayor tagged in 'chainsaw massacre' seeks new probe

By Michel Ralvos

THE MAYOR of a Maguindanao town, who had gone into hiding after he was implicated in a so-called "chainsaw massacre" in the province, has asked for a reinvestigation of the multiple murder case filed against him by the Department of Justice (DOJ) in connection with the grisly killings.

In a 15-page motion before the Cotabato City Regional Trial Court, Mayor Sumer Uy-el Dato Piang town accused Cotabato provincial prosecutor Rodolfo Mercene of railroading the filing of the criminal information against him and five others.

In his petition, Uy asked the latter court to remand the case to the provincial prosecutor's office for a preliminary investigation and to recall the arrest warrant it had issued against them on March 11.

Uy, brother-in-law of former Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan Jr., claimed that Mercene "unduly abridged or limits the conduct of preliminary investigation" in favor of the complainant, Datungkung Abdicasim, by purportedly denying them of their chance to controvert the allegations against them.

Rights disregarded

"[Mercene] disregarded the rights of the accused in his (Uy) resource affidavit, right to the due process of law and to equal protection of the law," Uy said in a petition dated April 17.

"By the actuations of [Mercene], he showed his partiality, prejudice and partiality in favor of the private complainant. He had rendered this case at the expense of herein accused," the petition added.

Aside from the mayor, also charged with multiple murder were Ibrahim Tajuya Usop, Boy Cawasalang, Shorkan Uy, Bhadi Dais and Mike Rosales.

Skeletal remains

The case stemmed from the discovery of skeletal remains that a team of investigators from the DOJ and National Bureau of Investigation unearthed in Shariff Aguak, the capital town of Maguindanao.

Uy was believed to have been involved in the slaughter of at least 18 people who were supposedly killed with the use of chainsaws.

The victims were said to be behind the 2001 murder of the late Datu Piang Mayor Zaudi Ampatuan, his son Andal Sr., who, along with other sons and relatives, were arrested for the massacre of 57 people, among them 32 media workers, in Maguindanao on Nov. 23, 2009.

Just one day

By January that Cotabato RTC Branch 15 Judge Georgia Arabis-Loyola ordered their arrest merely a day after the criminal information was submitted "without considering the voluminous documents of the case and the lack of concise affidavits of the respondents."

It is noted that Mohamad had filed the same complaint against him in 2000 which, according to him, was also handled by Ilanon.

"The case filed by the complainant... is similar to the one she filed way back in 2000," he said. "That 2004 case had been dismissed by the Cotabato City RTC Branch 13 for lack of probable cause."

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Customs streamlines issuance of clearances to aliens, travelers

THE BUREAU of Immigration (BI) has created a new office to mainly handle requests for clearances, clarifications and verifications of status of foreigners and certify the entry and exit records of international travelers.

The Authorization and Certification Division (ACD) was formed through a memorandum order issued by Commissioner Jaime Morente Bautista Jr. and approved by Justice Secretary Leila de Lima.

The ACD would mainly handle tasks formerly performed by three offices under two bureaus: the Investigation and certification unit and the derogatory section under the El Administration Division and the Anti-Fraud Division, and Daniel in a statement yesterday.

Under the memorandum, the Intelligence Fraud Division was downgraded and renamed the Anti-Fraud Section under the ICD.

"This new office will address the need to implement a system of past audit and verification of all visa and alien registration applications," David said.

He said that aside from its main tasked facilitating aliens' requests, the new division would also process clearances saying that a person was not on the bureau's hold-departure list, watch list or blacklist.

The new office would also issue immigration clearances, record and retrieve derogatory records of travelers and authenticate documents. All these duties were previously handled by the three separate offices, David noted.

He said the ACD would act as the central clearance, verification and compliance monitoring unit of the bureau, Jonathan R. Ly

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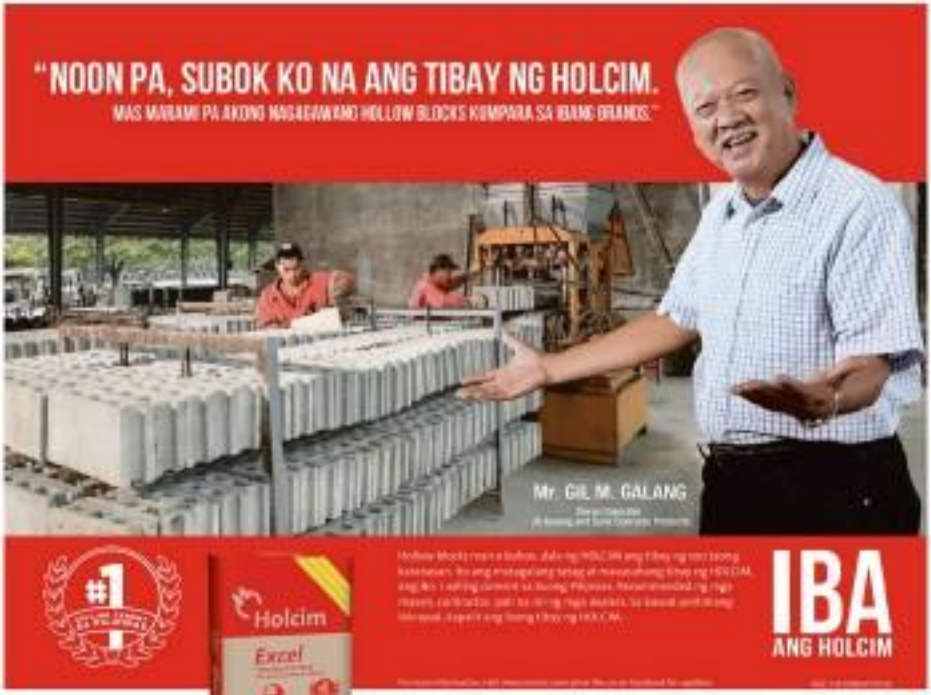
The Philippine Contractors Association (PCA) Marikina Valley Chapter in cooperation with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) will be hosting Securities Authorized Managing Officers (AMO) Course on May 3 & 4, 2018 at the Samsung Pangkabuhayan Ng Marikina "Kaplan Ahy" along J. P. Rizal Street, Sta. Elena, Marikina City.

Pre-registration fees are P15,000.00 per AMO, inclusive of seminar kit, lunch, morning and afternoon snacks for the 2-day duration of the course.

The AMO Course completion is now a requirement for the release of every contractor's PCAB license registration, whether renewal or original issuance. For in-house AMO Course, shall cover laws and regulations pertinent to the construction industry viz the National Building Code, the Labor Code, the Government Procurement Reform Act, the Internal Revenue Code, the Build-Operate-Transfer Law and the Local Government Code.

For more information, interested parties may contact the PCA Marikina Valley Chapter c/o Ms. Jane Gaspar at (02) 9637536 (02) 6443980 or by email at pcamarikinavalley@yahoo.com.



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Bajo de Masinloc

EDITORIAL

IT IS just as well that the Philippines has decided to unilaterally elevate its dispute with China over the Scarborough Shoal to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (Itlos). Despite China's assurances that it wants the matter diplomatically settled, it has not made any effort to have the issue mediated. Instead it has

High sin taxes may promote terrorism

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

GREED often makes the greedy ones blind to the repercussions of greed. We cannot find a better example of such greed and blindness in the proposed bill of Lawrence Rep. Joseph Emilio Abaya, which would increase excise taxes on cigarettes and liquor by more than 1,000 percent. Supporters of the bill are easily blinded by the billions of pesos in additional revenue that higher tax rates will bring to the government. They think that smuggling is a victimless crime. Basically a law enforcement problem that simply deserves government of potential income.

What they don't see is that it is more than law revenue that is at risk should sin taxes be increased. From the lessons learned by countries that have drastically increased their sin taxes, this measure has increased the incidence of violent crimes and even terrorism in those countries and other parts of the world. For the huge profits from cigarette smuggling finance the activities of terrorist organizations. It has been shown that cigarette smuggling, both an underground economy that supports many of the more violent actors on the world stage.

If it becomes a law, Abaya's sin tax reform bill will trigger smuggling, which could involve not only ordinary criminals but also terrorists. What is so far an only read about in foreign news, it 1,000 percent increase in sin taxes is the decision that may usher in renewed terrorism in the Philippines.

In its website, Health Justice Philippines, a Bloomberg initiative for tobacco control activities, provides a public health option that gives a quick introduction we mean. Going to source the 39 page "US report: Statistics rule to cigar smuggling for funds" of the International Tax and Investment Center (ITIC), a new that "illicit trade (in tobacco products) has become a major security challenge to different governments around the world and is increasingly used to fund terrorism.

"Terrorist organizations and other organized crime groups are exploiting the illicit trade in tobacco products because the highly lucrative activity is relatively low-risk compared to other heavily penalized crimes like drug trafficking and human smuggling," the ITIC report said.

In North Africa, unmasked doesn't paths that nomadic Tuareg tribesmen have wended for centuries on camelback to trade for cloth, salt, and dates are today the highways of terrorist-run cigarette smuggling. With the enforcement of the state withering, they drive SUVs along trails using satellite phones to move weapons, drugs and, increasingly, humans through the Sahara to the Mediterranean Sea.

The Center for Public Integrity (CPI) reveals that among those who control this underground trade is the al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), an Algeria-based terrorist organization believed to have been supported by Osama bin Laden. With hundreds of members, the group is blamed for a bloody campaign of bombings, murders and kidnappings across North Africa and Europe.

The group's lead cigarette smuggler is Mokhtar Belmokhtar, 40, who is blamed for the 2003 kidnapping of 32 European tourists and the 2008 murder of 33 Algerian customs officials.

"Of all Islamic terrorist groups, they (AQIM) have the most extensive and sophisticated network in Europe. And among their activities, smuggling is particularly important," says Lawrence Pallone, author of "Al Qaeda in Europe." Military officials and scholars in Algeria say cigarette smuggling has provided the bulk of AQIM's finances.

But al-Qaeda's affiliate in South Africa is not alone. After the crackdown on fundraising that followed the 9/11 attacks, international terrorist groups increasingly turned to cigarette smuggling, which has proven to be a lucrative, low-risk way of generating funds for terrorist operations. Compared to narcotics and human trafficking, the penalties for illegal tobacco trade are lighter. And smaller drugs are not rumored to detect tobacco.

CPI reveals that the Hezbollah, Taliban and al-Qaida are also involved in cigarette smuggling, facilitating illicit global distribution and using the profits to finance terrorist activities.

And we are the Real Irish Republican Army (Real IRA), which presents in using arms, robberies, bombings and assassinations, long after the Provisional IRA has chosen parliamentary means to unite Ireland.

Real IRA is responsible for nearly all the smuggled tobacco products in Northern Ireland, flooding the entire island with untaxed and counterfeit versions of popular cigarette brands. Authorities say cigarette smuggling has even put in the top funding source for the Real IRA.

At the core of the problem are the high profits of 40 billion-smuggling, which rival those of narcotics, plus the relative cheapness of conducting a terrorist operation.

A shipping container with half a million packs of counterfeit cigarettes costs as little as $62,500 to purchase in China, but could sell for much as $10.4 million on-line in the United States (assuming they sell $17.1.20 per pack). Not at high, but local smuggling procedures is definitely higher, freight costs are lower, and manpower is cheaper. In addition the countless are porous, and well-developed, are easily breached.

Compare that with the measly amount needed to wage a terrorist attack.

Were they to focus on the Philippines it will be infinitely cheaper for terrorists to fund operations into other areas. Just want to raise cigarette smuggler into our shores with high sin taxes?

ITIC says that smuggled cigarettes are available throughout the world, in high income or low income countries alike. The commissioned movement is a no-no policy that results in high retail prices relative to consumer income. And a low focus by law enforcers on the illicit is inaccurate due to lack of resources.

Battering

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

MICHAEL BARRIOZ offered a most astonishing observation last week. There's a "waste of delicious" against the law rocker, says curiously it feels de Lima's refusal to bow down to the Supreme Court's TRO to declare Mayagoitia Alejandro Negre refusal to cross-examine, and DBM refusal to stop to plan to release those prior trust to hold a pulling lot.

P-Noy's "relentless battering" of Senate Cayetano, Marquez said, hasn't just brought down Gloria's approval ratings, it has done as the entire judiciary's. The Supreme Court's ruling, done from 59 percent in November to 37 percent in March, sparking the defiance. "The problem when the personalities of independence and public confidence are not tied is that the judiciary loses its capacity to uphold the rule of law."

Well, I don't know that SM's defiance is part of a wave, but I do know that is a defiance that ought to be curtailed. The perfect response is that atrocity to him Michaelis "They paved paradise to put up a parking lot." That was the line that sprang to her head, she said, when she looked out of her hotel window in her favorite vacation spot in Hawaii to find the trees gone. The attitude of her using ("Big Yellow Taxi") applies the very same thought. "Until it always seem to go." That you don't know what you've got 'till it's gone.

But I wonder says. Meanwhile, you have to wonder if Marquez doesn't have the Midas touch in reverse. Everything he touches, including thought, turns into dross.

First off, his argument assumes that when you get relentlessly battered by the president, you become a victim. The public perception of his exhaustion is right there before his eyes. Arroyo never failed to relentlessly harass her enemies, and all she got for her pains was to endear her enemies to the public and get herself even more despised. A case of it being Ping Lacson. She can't stop flaming him in public your has never got the public to settle him. Rather than promoting Right to be a sign of guilt in this case, the public permanently to be a sign of an incentive for self-preservation. It didn't hurt Lacson's ratings/losers, it did so to Arroyo's, and she her ratings would still fall.

When Lacson came home after Arroyo was gone, he had no problems resuming his meteoric rise to stardom.

The point is clear. A relentless battering from the president gets you down? Depends on the president. And depends on what he's saying. But then, you convert a lot of people's drift, which is the only thing going for Marquez's argument.

Second, on the contrary. It's Gloria's and company's rubbish includes Marquez' defiance of law that is encouraging a sense of defiance—if there's that at all—against the law. The first is defiance of law in every possible way. It is defiance of law in the sense of law having to do with justice, in the sense of law as being a means to justice, in favor of law that has to do only with lawyers, in favor of law that has to do only with politics. It is defiance of law in the sense of law as leaving transcendent expectations for its foundation, in the sense of law as being anchored on common sense and an appreciation of reality, in favor of law that boils the worst to hold still, in favor of law that makes right into might and might into right.

Why shouldn't SM and Neyra defy the law? Corona does. His cabal does. A chief justice who sows his job to a midnight appointment does. A Supreme Court that despite final rulings does. The latter, the invocation of a finality that is not final, is truly staggering. It's the limitations of one against the press, a thing that makes sure the rich—who can afford a case to drag on bringing to duly up making hungry—will never lose.

Corona endgame, as he ought to have done so long ago, and did will surrender. Corona resigns, and Neyra and Justice Marquez will surrender. Corona resigns, and even philanthropy sponsors will surrender. One thing is sure. Corona resigns, and Malacañang will experience a wave of relief, if not of "few thanksgivers." Corona resigns and the sun will shine, the birds will chirp, the earth will be at peace, God is in his heavens, there is justice in this world.

Third, which is what makes Marquez's observation oppressive, you want to see a wave of defiance against the law, just cast your mind back to a few years ago. Except that what we had then wasn't just a wave, it was a tsunami. Except that what we had then wasn't just a person, it was a million. It was the invasion of Iraq-Kuwait. It was the millions of protesters.

The term "militant of impunity" was expressly used by the foreign press to apply to the mind-boggling number of journalists murdered in this country, which ranked us into the most dangerous place for journalists not only to Iraq, but it wouldn't have been confined to it. It's the perfect term as well for the murders of the political activists, which were far more plentiful, for barefaced wrongdoing in government, for criminals plying their shadowy trade under the glare of the sun. "Defiance of law" is a ridiculous way to describe what we have in Arroyo." The phrase was universal, contagious, obdurate.

The cause of it was government itself. Why shouldn't the drugs of this earth cops and pilots, mules and murder? Government was doing it itself! Why should criminals fear swollen? Not when they were the ones who decided who got was to be punished. You blow the whistle, you ended up in jail, or holed up in La Salle Greenhills. You coddled wrongdoers, you got appointed chief justice in the midnight hour. Overpowering Marquez: The problem solve the prosecution of election and plunder cases are not more by government is that the entire country loses its capacity to uphold the rule of law.

Some things you need no relentlessly batter. That is one of them.

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Scarborough Shoal

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

IT WOULD be foolhardy for the Philippines to think that it can maintain its claim to the Scarborough Shoal by force of arms. And our people know it. Thus the Philippines has made the only reasonable choice, namely to seek a resolution of the controversy with China through peaceful means.

But what is the basis of contention? It is about a group of islands, reefs, rocks and matters submerged. My tech is natural resources.

Jurisdiction over matters is necessarily dependent on jurisdiction over land to which the matters adjoin. This is governed by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos). Although the Scarborough Shoal is outside the limits set by the Treaty of Paris for Philippine territory, the Philippines has had a long history of involvement related to the area. The senior official Philippine name is Bajo de Masinloc, which in English means "below Masinloc," Masinloc being connected to Zambales. The waters have been treated as a fishing area of Filipino fishermen. The Philippine Atlas of 1734, supervised by Father Murillo Velarde, shows that the Spanish flag was raised there in the Philippines, and the area for eager practice. It has been the practice of the Philippine Navy to chase away foreign fishing vessels intruding into the area.

Our Constitution declares that Philippine territory consists of the archipelago and "and all other territories over which the Philippines has sovereignty or jurisdiction, consisting of its terrestrial, fluvial and aerial domains, including its territorial sea, the seabed, the subsoil, the insular shelves, and other submarine areas," that is, other territories which, depending on available evidence, might belong to the Philippines. The 1973 Constitution referred to those as "other territories belonging to the Philippines by historic right or legal title."

The extent of the archipelago can be verified by reference to the lines drawn by the Treaty of Paris. But the Constitution does not specify where the "other territories" over which the Philippines has jurisdiction are. Scarborough Shoal lies outside the limits of the Treaty of Paris.

The latest move of the Philippines to assert its claim over Scarborough Shoal, among other areas, was the enactment of Republic Act 9522, the new baseline law. Baselines are lines drawn along the low-water mark of an island or group of islands which mark the end of the internal waters and the beginning of the territorial sea. Such treasury issues those in many baselines following the provisions of the Law of the Sea.

RA 9522 provides for one baseline around the archipelago and separate baselines for a "regime of islands," that is, islands other than those within the archipelago. Like the archipelago, islands within a "regime of islands" outside the archipelago have their own "territorial sea, exclusive economic zone, continental shelf, and associated areas." RA 9522 places Scarborough Shoal within a Philippine regime of islands.

The enactment of RA 9522 was immediately met with protest from China and Vietnam, both of which also claim historic title over the area. At the moment, national interest is focused on the activities of Chinese fishing vessels and patrol planes in the area of Scarborough Shoal.

Although the land area may be relatively insignificant, the waters are not. From the baseline are measured the territorial sea (12 nautical miles outward), the contiguous zone (24 miles from the outward edge of the territorial sea), and the exclusive economic zone (200 miles from the outward edge of the territorial sea). A coastal state has sovereign rights over living and nonliving resources and other economic resources within the exclusive economic zone. These are what the Philippines wants to protect. When one considers the vastness of the territory and the riches that lie within it, it is understandable why states should quarrel over its control. This is where we are today in relation to China. How will the quarrel be resolved?

The Philippines has invoked China to submit the case to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (Itlos). The tribunal is an independent judicial body established by the Unclos. It can adjudicate disputes arising from the law of the sea. So far it seems that China has rejected the submission to the Itlos.

All is not lost, however. Part XV of the Unclos provides for a comprehensive system for the settlement of disputes. It requires parties to settle their disputes by peaceful means. They have a choice of four alternatives. The submission to the Itlos, which seemingly has been rejected by China, is just one of the four. The remaining three are: the International Court of Justice, an arbitral tribunal constituted in accordance with Annex VII to the convention, and a special arbitral tribunal constituted in accordance with Annex VIII to the convention. But the parties must agree on the choice of the method of settlement to be used. This is a major challenge to the legal and diplomatic skills of the Aquino administration.

The singular truth

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Nonalyn Mustafa

Save Planet Earth?
What hubris!
Who are we,
puny humans to save
Planet Earth?

LAST WEEK there was a front-page photo in the business sheeting a comely girl with her tinted upper body painted all over with what the caption said were worms and nonbiodegradable. Although it was a thoroughly decent picture, with nothing revealed (her left hand was cupped over her left breast), what I found objectionable was the usual appeal to "Save Planet Earth."

Save Planet Earth? What hubris! Who are we, puny humans to save Planet Earth? It was indeed beautiful and perfect to sustain life and the thoughts we have (sinful, but not by us). But what has come to us, that we now have we found it, and we are destroying it with greed, with lust for power over peoples and lands, and with an unrelenting, consuming ambition to be gods of this beautiful earth, our own Olympus.

But save it now? How? How can we bring back to life the clogged rivers when before dredging is done at one end, the other is again clogged with plastic bags and has food upstream? Can we make the trees grow back? Can we take out the oil from the drills and put the earth's lubricants back to soften the impact of moving planet?

No. Most explicitly impossible!

Why not? Because if you key in just your ear to the ground you can hear the earth. It is a living, breathing thing of which we are a part, in an infinite connectivity that has no termination. In secret say we are developing this river or planning those trees to save Planet Earth as if it were an inanimate, passive thing spinning somewhere in space, crying out to us, in earnest to save it from dying.

Mother Earth if under this notion can save itself, no thanks to humanity. Right from the time it was created it was already equipped and programmed to accumulate heavy clouds above to fall in torrents of rainwater rain and typhoons and storm floods to drown us and throw back out to earth to us.

Earth can move mountains to cause landslides and destroy homes and the people in them. A carbonoxide exposition in seismic places to crush our superstructures and superegos and, sometimes, to roll the usually calm sea to sweep the shores and spill into our streets, sweeping homes, cars and people.

No. In the debate is all wrong. Save Planet Earth? Save her, save ourselves would be a much more truthful caption for that otherwise lovely picture of the painted girl. (I hope the worms in that paint didn't harm her skin.)

Michael Jackson did give a hint of this emotion, this cause of living a pure call of, of living and dying as a part of all creation: "We are the world; we are the people; there are people dying, we're saving our own lives" This artist that he was, did he know something many of us have yet to realize of, though it's staring us in the face, has been staring us in the face, since the beginning of time... "ask us to usher, that to that"? Can there be anything more explicit than that?

So, instead of your money at Vilar Bebe's door for that younger than springtime glowing skin, but before even she and Hayden Pho go into their second make-up and break-up, there we will turn to dust.

We come and go, earth will still be around... at least before it gets swallowed up by a black hole—saving itself, sending down rains and typhoons, shaking itself with earthquakes, volcanoes but then emptying, withering, and near-total digging graves for us with its sinkholes. It will plant the trees and water them to maximum in our lowlands and to sustain its water supply, when we're no longer around to eat them.

What is why I read with much interest the Evangelical essay titled "The big picture" (Inquirer, 9/14/12) by Rev. John Mark Shinnel, because I think he got it right.

You don't need to poison beautiful girls with toxic paints to save the earth.

Excerpts: "I just wish to let everybody know that I equally admire all those who have helped the environment in their own unsung ways. I wish to remind everybody that there are different avenues for the same advocacy. No green avenue is wrong, but joining simply to belong is NEVER the right advocacy.

"Fight for what is right, not for one that's trending. Fight for all trees, not just for those 182 trees (in SM Baguio). Truth be told, I've seen more of the latter advocates use their cars around the city more often than walk. I've seen the same activists who step in Old with their latest plastic bags to cow.

"From my (new-the-ill perspective, this issue has turned into a 'fearful (ethic' scenario. The only noble guardians of the earth have been infiltrated by pop culture fascination. It's also become an elite pop straight out of 'The Emperor's New Clothes.'

"...I will be called an ignorant, indifferent cultural elitist by some, but I'll keep on being an environmentalist the best way I know. I need roses. I'm taking in the scents of coconut trees in the very near future. But until then I'll just sit back and ignore every bag that passes the dinner table."

* * *

Comments to nshu@philonline.com

Visible children few want to see

COMMENTARY

Gwynedd Kumar

TEST RAVE no Twitter song, no righteous war being waged for their exercise. They are visible; they are out there on the streets. From the rubber lanes of Manila to the dangerous dark alleys of Rio, tens of millions of children in the world over are daily fighting hunger, violence and abuse just to survive and scratch a living on the streets.

As the world marked the International Day for Street Children last week, children in street situations served as a grim reminder of how one of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in the world continues to be deprived of its basic rights, failed by governments, institutions and society.

The overwhelming neglect of street children is evidenced by the fact that we do not even know how many of them exist. There have never been a credible assessment of street children's numbers as any collective effort to address the issues that continue to blight the lives of millions. The frequently cited United Nations global estimate of 100 million children growing up on urban streets is now outdated and widely disputed. Many believe the real number to be much higher and using this to signal urbanization, migration and general gravitative world populations. Add to them socioeconomic, political or cultural factors that jeopardize children on the streets.

According to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, "street children are those who live in a habitat of suffering violence, particularly serious and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. You only need to ask. "No one treats us like human beings. They are always trying to punch and kick us," says 11-year-old Ojie who ended up on Dhaka's streets when he was eight to escape beatings of his stepmother. His friend, 12-year-old Jo Jo, says he sometimes earns enough to feed himself. On a good day he makes about $2 for an entire day's hard work. "One night when I was sleeping at the railway station, a person approached me. He said come with me, I said no I can't go with you because I don't know you. He hit me on my face."

Birth, though less in number than here, often has the worst conditions on the streets. "I was left pregnant by boys and men when I go top picking on the streets," says 8-year-old Nisha who supports her family and lives in a slum cluster near Delhi's busy Nizamuddin Railway station. A UN report on violence against children cites a study in Rwanda where three-quarters of street servant girls in street situations—a third of them under the age of 16, admitted they were sexually active. A shocking 93 percent of such girls report suffering basic rape.

A recent report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on children's rights says in addition to economic poverty and family breakdown or abandonment of children, harmful practices such as early and forced marriages, and end discrimination, war and internal displacement are also some of the reasons that children end up on the streets. Almost 9 out of 10 children on the streets of Rwanda are orphans. Nigeria have been stigmatized as "witches" and abandoned to live on the streets by their own parents.

Contrary to popular belief, street children are not restricted to the developing world alone. They are present in all countries. In the UK it estimated 300,000 young people run away from home each year and a fifth of them sleep rough. It is believed that there are up to 16,000 roaming street children in St. Petersburg, Russia, and the majority of them are under the age of 13. The particular problems children in developed countries face might differ from those encountered by street children in a developing country, but they all still have commonalities in the streets and their hands of enforcement.

They are so many and so prevalent, yet the street children have merged like lifeless features into the landscapes in which they exist. Street children around the world go unnoticed, unheard, and, worst, they remain unaccounted for. With no registration and identity documents, they often have no access to basic services such as schooling and healthcare to which all children are entitled. They suffer routine violations of their fundamental rights and are left vulnerable to situations that risk their survival and infract their dignity.

The child rights organization Plan believes that registration of every child is a key first step in addressing the complex issues affecting the lives of children, particularly those in challenging circumstances such as the street children. It is a robust, credible argument that all children must be registered in their right and then accounted for by their governments. If the children are not recorded, they remain invisible to authorities. Therefore, the unions that drive them to the streets and the factors that severely compromise their rights in a life connected to the streets remain uninvestigated and unmitigated. A formal identity thus establishes every child's legal existence and creates a solid starting point for safeguarding their rights.

It is unfortunate and the world in general ignore their plight, for most children envisaging themselves from the menace of street existence is a lonely, losing battle. They are up against all odds. There is caution in wrapping a rose for the invisible—but there are not many values for the visible street children few want to see.

Gwynedd Kumar is a development journalist and global press officer at the child rights organization Plan International. He is also a Governing Human Rights Scholar.

'Testicular fortitude'

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

THE LATEST issue of Newsweek (April 23 and 30, 2012) has this short account by Tonka Varadarajan on the Philippine-China standoff at Panatag Shoal in the West Philippine Sea.

"Thriller in Manila

"In an impressive show of bravado—the word for testicular fortitude in the Tagalog language—the Philippines won its biggest naval wrestling to confront Chinese fishing and surveillance vessels operating illegally in waters just off the country's northwest coast. The area known as the Scarborough Shoal is in the South China Sea, a body of water over which Beijing—with characteristic immodesty—asserts an elastic sovereign control. In deploying to navy vessels for an extraordinary collision course with the Chinese, who in fact, also, at Manila's name for the waters in question: the West Philippine Sea."

Fifteen years after passage of the Basco Convention and ARF Manila-Jakarta Lanes, we do not have much to show in terms of equipment and hardware for territorial defense. From the newest vessel we have, the BRP Gregorio del Pilar, was purchased with the use of funds from the Department of Energy and not from the sale of the bases.

After so much lip service to the principle of ASEAN modernization, we are now paying the price for the neglect of our Armed Forces.

* * *

At a town conference held in Bagnuen City, Justice Secretary Leila de Lima reported on the status of the hunt for a number of high-profile fugitives. Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan is accused of being responsible for the disappearance of two UP students in 2006. Former Jolanson Gov. Joel Reyes and his brother, Cong. Roilo Golez, Bagong Alyansa Bayan, are suspected of masterminding the assassination of broadcaster-environmentalist Gerry Ortega in Puerto Princesa last year. Senator Rep. Ruben Ecleo was recently found guilty of murdering his wife Alma in 2003.

Secretary De Lima said the Manila-run "weak" intelligence work by the Philippine National Police, the National Bureau of Investigation, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. She added, "There is much to be desired with our intelligence services."

There is someone else missing from this line-up of high-profile fugitives. What about MILF Commander Dan Asmod?

Let me once again refresh our memories.

Six months ago, 19 Army troopers were massacred at Al Barka, Basilan. The troopers were ambushed, shooting signs of torture, and some were beheaded; it was not the first time that such barbarism took place against our soldiers. In July 2007, also at Al Barka, 14 Marines on a search mission for kidnapped Italian priest Fr. Giancarlo Bossi, were killed in like manner by MILF elements. In both instances, the enemy was led by Asmod.

A month after the massacre, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, at a press conference in Zamboanga City, vowed to capture Asmod.

So far, there is little to indicate that the AFP is serious about bringing to justice a criminal who mutilates and beheads his victims. The AFP has ordered the court-martial of four Army officers for negligence and operational lapses in the deployment of troops in Al Barka in the massacre. That is as it should be. But to the mastermind of command responsibility, he has declared not stop the AFP from pursuing and holding to account those who acted with savage cruelty in the slaughter of our soldiers.

"Opisa Pasumbal" sounds good and looks good but at certain times, it only for our still respect, perhaps when the AFP could use it a little more "instinctive fortitude."

* * *

More than 50 years after graduating from the Philippine Military Academy and serving in the Armed Forces, gulling members of PMA Class 1956 and 1957 met on the green of the Philippine Navy Golf Course at Fort Bonifacio to renew a cordial camaraderie that has served to enhance the bond of comradeship we have among ourselves.

The roster sometimes in alphabetical order:

Class 1956—Bello, Jose; Caballes, Fred; Conarbas, Severino; David, Romeo; Farolan, Ramon; Gopuco, Melliot; Mabry, Jose; and Pante, Augustus.

Class 1957—Buenaventura, Vicente; Reyes, Rogelio; De Villa, Renato; Pernito, Edwardo; Ambrosio, Tagumpay; Mendoza, Ismael; Santiago, Antonio; Tapia, Cesar; and Temple, George.

By the way all made it to our rank with Brian de Villahoud being the pack with four stars on his shoulders aside from a stint as defense secretary after retirement and a run for the presidency.

It was a series of three-star dinners, all at the Navy Golfers with Class 1957 winning the first match on January. Class 1956 tied up the score in March and repeated its victory last October for a 2-1 conquest of their former plebes. As the saying goes, "Once a plebe, always a plebe." (Ghreat!)

Some highlights of the third game: Augustus Pante finally "shot his age" scoring 78 on a par 70 course after a brilliant display of putting skills using a Texas wedge; Ed Ambrosio earned his third hole-in-one at Hole No. 17 using a hybrid 4 iron; and Ramon Farolan, the only company of Bello, Caballes, Jose Bello, and Mon Bayloss.

* * *

Last Friday, family and friends of Lt. Gen. Salvador Mison, PMA Class 1953, gathered to mark the promotion of Brig. Gen. Salvador Medrind Mison Jr., Class 1984. The young Mison is the first in his class to reach star rank, making him today the youngest general in the AFP.

Lieutenant General Mison is a Bicolano from Naga, Camarines Sur, studied a brilliant Army career as AFP vice chief of staff. He went on to serve as customs commissioner and currently is president of Basic Holdings. His wife Jane and my wife Betsy are members of UP Liberal Arts Class of 1958.

Sons and buddy Mison have much to be proud of. Justin Evan an Air Force general, they have for children an assistant immigration commissioner (Siegfried), a veterinary surgeon (Michael), a medical doctor (Javier), an accountant (Jean Marie), and a finance analyst (Melinda).

Brigadier General Mison not only looks like a future full commanding general, but also a possible AFP chief of staff. He needs two more stars to match those of his father and a fourth would put him at the top rank of AFP leadership. The Air Force deserves to capable hands, ready for future developments involving national security, sources.

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LETTERS

On Tiglao smoking out fake letter-senders

RVE SAVE before Rigoberto Tiglao came out with his column about fake senders in reporter's Lorraine Andrea Orquinaso's name. In his 4/11/12, I received an e-mail from a certain Monica Acosta (monica822@hotmail.com) signed as Monika Valdivieso. In it, famous Valdivieso wrote, "I'm writing a research paper on the impeachment case and found in the document your name as the author with the column Tiglao's thesis or plan to commit the Supreme Court. I think it is made a defendant conspiracy idea, but can you comment on the case? Didn't that case in this or to be impeached is Justice Del Castillo?" Among us haters, I replied instantly with a curt thought nothing more of it.

Then days after Tiglao's article, I got another e-mail from Arianna Valdivieso which read, "A search in the Internet, as Tiglao suggested, doesn't yield any result on you. Are you taking a freelance status? Are you in broadcasting? Can I apply for a similar job?"

From his previous stories on anyway pulls in his trick which written about how "his people" crucified Jose Claro—former Senate Cayetano, in this case—Tiglao has been systematically discrediting anyone/anyone viewed as Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her allies. The most recent tack, supposedly exposing fake letter senders and connecting them to Presidente Aquino's propaganda people, is just profoundly pathetic.

Now I know that the investment small non-actually Tiglao displaying his investigative prowess is running out fake letter senders, complains as the effort was, it is really telling how he is prone to generalizations and false assumptions. To him, all writers of Asterisk and love all are relatives and favorites or paid hacks. And as a practice of his own, every time someone disagrees with a false letter sender, he is himself employing fake identities in his investigation.

Of course, there is proof that Arianna Valdivieso is connected to Tiglao. (A Google search yielded a FB profile and an entrepreneur.) Her online Connect defense tools, which accused senator judges of swearing before their Malacañang, I do not have to hide behind lawyer-client privilege to avoid protecting my sources. And unlike Tiglao, whose column supposedly published on PhilyAPR needs as the fabric, I do not need a columnist's cloak to get away with groundless statements.

As an ordinary citizen, I only have my rights as the rights and my conscience as my guide.

—ROLDAN CUELLAR LEJARTE,
roldan.lejarte@yahoo.com

No reference to Balikatan in PBR phone interview

I WOULD like to clarify specific statements attributed to me in the article titled "Balikatan bad for ecology, experts say" (Inquirer, 4/17/12) I responded to because inquirer reporter Alcaro's query regarding the consequences of a conflict situation in Scarborough Shoal. This was through a phone conversation which, understandably, was taken out of context in the article.

I mentioned that it would be bad for the marine environment since explosive ordnance would destroy the coral reefs. However, I did not refer specifically to the Balikatan exercises. In fact, I did not know then there was a Balikatan at the time of the call. The estimation of shark population in the Spratlys was in reference to the reports by members of the Philippine Navy stationed in the area where they saw fishes sharks poached there. This decline is observed to be related to unregulated fishing activity and not due to military activity.

I did mention in fact that it would be better if the concerned fan allows for quiet for the neighborhood, as an to avoid taking phone interviews out of context. I do believe that cooperative efforts and designating Marine Protected Areas in disputed areas are important and could be ways to establish confidence among conflicting parties. Further, sustainable fishing will be promoted and will benefit fishers in the long run.

In addition, I would like to mention that I am not an espouser of Conservation International and various speculate the organization.

—DR. FORTUNE D. ALIÑO
professor,
University of the Philippines-
Marine Science Institute

Worthless stock certificates in coco farmers' hands

THIS IS a reaction to the April 14 editorial of the Inquirer titled "Still beyond their reach." Allow me to explain that the 1 million uncultivated farmers of Unified (Philippine Coconut Producers Federation) are the coconut landowners from whom the coco levy was collected during the Marcos martial law regime.

Being a beneficiary member of Unified, I frankly assess at the fact that I still hold some United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) stock certificates. Likewise, thousands of coconut landowners who are Unified members here in the municipality of Pagsanjan and other coconut producing towns, particularly in the third and fourth districts of Laguna, have in their possession worthless UCPB, SMC, etc. stock certificates.

Finally, may I suggest that the Philippine Coconut Authority conduct an updated census of coconut planters all over the country. I personally know that many coconut landowners (all of whom were Unified members in Pagsanjan) are already dead.

—CASSIO JOSE B. TOLAS,
vice mayor, Pagsanjan, Laguna
chair, Unified, Pagsanjan

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China, Russia open naval exercises

BEIJING—China and Russia on Monday launched their first joint naval exercises involving an unprecedented number of ships amid tensions between China and its Asian neighbors over regional territorial claims.

The six days of drills are taking place in the Yellow Sea off China's east coast, the official China News Service said, adding they were the first dedicated exercises involving the two navies.

The exercises were Qingdao-city off the coast of Shandong province were started by Russian and Chinese military officials on Sunday morning, the state-run Xinhua news agency said.

They come as China boasts military spending and asserts its claims over disputed territories, including a chain of islands in the East China Sea also claimed by Japan.

China and several Asian countries also have rival claims to uninhabited islands in the West Philippine (South China) Sea, which is believed to be rich in oil and natural gas and straddles strategic shipping lanes vital to regional trade.

The exercises will focus on joint air defense, and submarine tactics and search and rescue, Xinhua has previously said. They will also include simulated rescue of hijacked vessels and counterterrorism drills.

For 'regional peace'

China has 16 naval vessels and two submarines taking part while Russia has four warships.

China said on Thursday the exercises were aimed at upholding regional peace.

"This joint military exercise is a long scheduled one between China and Russia in order to uphold regional peace and stability," foreign ministry spokesperson Liu Weimin told a regular news briefing.

China and Russia have regularly participated in four military exercises since 2005, some involving other countries as well, Xinhua has said.

The two countries previously held joint war games in 2005, but those are the first dedicated naval exercises, a Chinese expert said.

Tactics and technology

Yu Zhou, an expert who advises the navy, said the number of ships involved was unprecedented.

"Both sides will have deep exchanges in terms of tactics and technology." Yu told state television.

But the exercises could worry China's Asian neighbors.

Beijing and Tokyo have a long-running dispute over a chain of islands, called Diaoyu by China and Senkaku by Japan—which sit in rich fishing grounds that may harbor huge energy resources.

Japan has so far shown little interest in the drills, which are taking place more than 1,000 kilometers north of the disputed islands.

But Japan's defense ministry said in a recent report that China was becoming increasingly active in waters near Japanese territory while Russia was holding more frequent military exercises in its far east region.

It said that Russia's military warned the United States that the Xinhuanian exercises had raised risks of armed confrontation over the disputed area, in what news reports described as its "toughest high-level warning yet" following weeks of tension.

"Anyone with clear eyes saw long ago that behind these drills is reflected a menacing threat that will lead the South China Sea issue down a fork in the road towards military confrontation and resolution through armed force," said the commentary in the Chinese paper, which is the chief mouthpiece of the People's Liberation Army.

"Through this kind of meddling and intervention, the United States will only stir up the entire South China Sea situation towards increasing chaos and this will inevitably have a massive impact on regional peace and stability."

The Pentagon said Saturday it was a regular exercise "not tied to any current situation."

"The focus of this year's exercise is on disaster response and crew maneuvers," said Navy Cmdr. Leslie Hull-Ryde, the Pentagon spokesperson.

AFP: War games not directed at China

From page A1

Mead and called Huangyan Island by China, which insists it is part of its territory.

"We maintain that the Burning Mead is not connected in any way to Balikatan exercises. The Balikatan has long been planned, and its purpose is to strengthen interoperability between US and Philippine troops and exchange of ideas," Garcia said on drills.

"It is not his. The Balikatan is being conducted in many places, south to Basa Airbase, Mactan-Benguerson Air Reserve Base — Tarlac, Cavite — Palawan," Garcia said, pointing out that these areas are far from the West Philippine Sea, known in the rest of the world as the South China Sea.

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Not directed vs China

A Philippine Coast Guard vessel and rescue vessel, the BRP Edsa, is facing off with two Chinese vessels at the detail in an impasse that began on April 14 when Beijing's surveillance ships stopped the Philippine Navy from investigating poaching of marine life by eight Chinese fishing boats, which later slipped away.

Garcia stressed that although both sides would continue the Balikatan as "traditional combat maneuvers," the exercises would include "non-traditional missions," like disaster response and humanitarian civic assistance projects.

"We are not going to stop Balikatan just in spite of China's warnings. This has long been planned, whether there are issues or not with Panatag Shoal," he said. "This is not directed toward or against any nation."

In a statement yesterday, Gen. Jessie Delfino, AFP chief of staff, said the Balikatan 2011 "aims to strengthen and enhance internal Philippine HADR (humanitarian aid and disaster response) processes through collaborative dialogue."

"The different approaches employed by other countries in HADR will surely help us widen our perspective and improve our policies, procedures, preparations and response in the emergency of natural calamities and man-made disasters in the Philippines," he said.

Scarborough Shoal lies 130 kilometers off Zambales province, and is well within the Philippines' 370 kilometer economic zone, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). China claims the shoal, along with the Spratlys, aside from the Philippines and China, four other countries are claiming the mineral-rich Spratlys.

China 'war-mongering'

"It seems they are the ones war-mongering," said Lt. Gen. Jaime-ito Salvino, AFP Western Command chief, according to the Chinese warning. "There is no issue about any effect the Balikatan might have on the West Philippine Sea," he said in a phone interview with Camp Aguinaldo reporters from his base in Puerto Princesa.

Salvino said Balikatan involved a "purely field training exercise and CBSO (civil-military operations), which are not related to the West Philippine Sea or China."

"So where are these allegations coming from?" he said.

He said the exercises involving some 4,500 American troops and 2,500 Filipino soldiers would push through to guerillas and China's war-mongering. It does not concern China anyway," Salvino said, adding that there was no point responding to China's allegation as "it is very far from the truth."

"Far from be. That's just war-mongering," he added.

Friendly consultations

Zhang Hua, spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in Manila, dismissed suggestion that Beijing was escalating tensions in Panatag.

"We have been very restrained until now," Zhang said in a text message. "We did not aggravate the situation in some sense."

Wire, Huangyan Island is part of China's territory. Second, it is the Philippine Navy that first pointed their guns to our fishermen," he told the Inquirer. "We have not sent our navy's (to the shoal) yet, but only our fishermen."

He confirmed reports that a huge Chinese fishery and marine law enforcement ship had arrived in the shoal and had linked up with another Chinese vessel. But he said the vessel was there for fisheries administration."

Zhang said China's "door is always open" for what he called "friendly consultations" with the Philippines on the dispute.

Last week, negotiations between the two sides ended in a "stalemate," according to spokesperson of the two sides. With a report from Jerry E. Esplanada

SCHOOL TURNOVER. A US Marine sits with children during the turnover of classrooms built by American troops as part of the Philippine-US Balikatan exercise at Santa Elementary School in Puerto Princesa City in Palawan.

Pinoy soldiers amazed at modern US weapons

From page A1

maneuver strategies that the US troops taught us. We demonstrated our speed and alertness during the exercises but their gadgets are unique and modern," Gregorio said the Inquirer, speaking in Filipino. "Their firearms and gadgets are really powerful and advanced."

But Americans were impressed, too, with their Filipino counterparts, especially as how Filipino soldiers moved quickly during their night-time exercises, he said.

Unique gadget

Gregorio belongs to a platoon from the Philippine Army's 30th Infantry Battalion and one of several thousands of Filipinos and US soldiers taking part in the annual military exercises in Palawan, the two nations.

This year's Balikatan features a unique GPS (global positioning system)-aided gadget that enables commanders to monitor every movement of their men on the ground, said Col. Jack Pritchard, a commander of the combined armed forces.

Pritchard said that with the gadget—called Instrumentation Training System Units (ITSUs)—commanders are able to monitor detailed actions, including troop positioning and how the soldiers aim their firearms.

This way, the soldiers can be briefed on their best moves, as well as their errors, while in combat, he said.

It was the first time such equipment had been brought out of US territory, Balikatan officials said.

Unfazed by protests

Lt. Georgie Wells, the Filipino commander, said the exercises had no power scenario.

"All that Balikatan aims is interoperability," Wells said, referring to the ability of American and Filipino soldiers to work together and respond to any emergency including natural disasters.

Pritchard and Wells said soldiers training in this military reservation continued to focus on the exercises despite protests from political activists, who claim the exercises indicate growing American military presence in the country.

The exercises include security exercises drills and community relations activities.

Earlier, US Ambassador to the Philippines Harry Thomas Jr. said that aside from 2,500 Philippine troops and 4,500 American soldiers, representatives from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) said other countries were also taking part.

The Balikatan started at various locations in the country on April 14. They will end on April 27.

US ARMY soldiers practice combat skills at Fernandez Hills inside Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija. Now in its 25th year, the Balikatan will have command post exercises for disaster preparedness and humanitarian civic assistance projects.

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RECYCLED ART Mario A. Mallari Jr. uses his ingenuity in recycling junk metal and creating masterpieces to help in the campaign against pollution.

From metal scraps

From page A1

said he was too scared to cry, especially as policemen with fiery metal dockets.

But every time he saw such discards, he said, he felt he needed to turn them into something good.

Finally, one day in May last year, he grabbed up a piece of scrap metal and began to trim it into a work of art. Then he tried another piece. And then some more.

Before he knew it, he said, it had become "wildlife." He was amazed that he completed 150 sculptures in just a short time. With each an eye-pal, he was ready to exhibit.

He mounted a series of exhibits, including an exhibit at the Senate of the Philippines.

Then followed exhibits at shopping malls in Mandaluyong and in San Juan City to Manila (Manila and, now, to Dau Pablo City in Laguna.

Mallari said he sold 70 percent of his 300 sculptures to art collectors, including former First Lady Imelda Marcos, Rep. Mary Joyce Chipeco of Laguna (2nd District) and Lagunenses. BF Pamilio.

Mallari said that he derived great joy from "turning something discarded and considered worthless into an artwork that is adored and appreciated." And he considers the finished artwork his show of "respect for the metal and nature."

Recycling

"The thread that runs like red wire through all my works is recycling," Mallari says on his website, www.marimallari.com, to explain his passion for turning junk into work of art.

Mallari said he had received invitations to exhibit in Austria, Hong Kong, Australia and the United States.

A Filipino-art enthusiast who lives in Austria had offered to sponsor and exhibit in Vienna, Mallari said.

The ambassador offered his gallery and his home for accommodation to Mallari, but did not offer to pay for his trip to Austria.

"I had to decline the offer for now because I didn't have enough resources yet to do exhibits overseas," Mallari said. "Maybe my time would come," he added.

He also turned down an offer by an American art contractor to help him move his his shop to Australia. The enthusiasm assured him of good sales if he would relocate, he said.

It was a "big temptation," he said. But he declined, he said, because he wanted to help develop his craft here instead of to another country. He asked the ambassador, however, to find him markets in Australia.

Mallari said he preferred to promote his artworks here to help raise public awareness of "hidden treasures" among the objects that litter the environment.

Storybook characters

His sculptures are characters whose names could have been lifted from storybooks, such as Ogre, Baby Ogre, Kamikiri-head, Dragon Heart and Offline Among them are small-scale versions of battle tanks, helicopter gunships, a train inspired by the 1976 movie "Commando Cowing," a motorcycle named Easy Rider inspired by the eponymous movie, and another motorcycle inspired by a 1911 Harley.

There are also representations of mythical creatures, including a mammoth reptile, a leopard and a dragon, with intricate details that show how scrap material was "repurposed," as Mallari described it. A viewer will be amazed at how Mallari crafted the trunk of his elephant from the base of a rusty chainsaw.

Mallari said the helicopter gunship required at least 15 kilograms of scrap metal, which he collected and stored in his shop. He completed the piece using additional metal he bought from junk shops.

At the start, Mallari said his sculptures for P3,000 to P5,000 a piece. But when his works became popular, the gallery agent raised the prices, which now start from P20,000.

Support for campaigns

Mallari's exhibit "Metal Green, the Art of Metal Recycling," runs from from April 30 to 10 to SM City San Pablo. In a speech at the opening of the exhibit, Mallari declared his openness to inspire other artists like him to be creative for the sake of the environment.

He also declared his readiness to support environmental campaigns. "It is for me, a great deal of honor to be part of efforts to protect nature," he said.

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₱688	Manila to Bacolod, Cebu, Legazpi, Tuguegarao or Virac / Cebu to Butuan
₱788	Manila to Laoag, Puerto Princesa, Roxas, Tacloban or Tagbilaran / Cebu to Davao / Cagayan de Oro to Iloilo
₱988	Cebu to General Santos or Puerto Princesa / Davao to Iloilo
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₱1,488	Manila to Cagayan de Oro, Davao or Zamboanga
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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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Catholic priest hailed as environmental hero

By TJ Burgonio

ENVIRONMENTALISTS who honored Isadro Dan yesterday remembering the unyielding stand that a Roman Catholic priest took to protect the rights of the Mangyans in a landslide spot of the island in Mindoro three years ago.

Fr. Isidro "Edot" Gariguez, then pastoral adviser of the Mangyan Mission Catholic Church in Mindoro, took the ranks of a grassroots movement fighting a Norwegian mining company. He spoke about the degradation of the environment in the Mangyan homeland (not only from the pulpit but also in European capitals where he tried to rally the attention of officials and politicians to the plight of Mindoro's indigenous people).

It was a dangerous advocacy. Great wealth was at stake, not only for Norway's Intex Resources, which proposed an open-pit nickel mine in Mindoro in the early 1990s, but also for Filipinos civilian and military officials who backed the project. A member of Alliance Against Mindoro Mining (Alamin), Gariguez led was murdered, and Gariguez himself became a target of harassment, even death threats.

Intex Resources and its local backers were tough opponents. Many protests failed to force the mining company to fold its tent and pitch it in some other part of the globe.

11-day hunger strike

But Intex and its supporters misunderstood the will and courage of Gariguez and his Mangyan followers. In November 2009, Gariguez led the Mangyans to Manila and staged a hunger strike in front of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) building to force the government to look into the perils that Intex had exposed the Mangyans by bringing its operations to Mindoro.

The action lasted 11 days. Gariguez and the Mangyans were exhausted, but it was worth it. The DENR issued a cease and desist orders to Intex. Soon the company was gone.

Gariguez, 49, has since been reassigned to Manila as executive secretary of the National Secretariat for Social Action (Nassa)—Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. But his colleagues remember him with fondness and admiration for the courageous stand that he took to save the environment for the Mangyans of Mindoro.

FR. EDU GARIGUEZ: Recipient of Goldman Environmental Prize

Goldman prize

For his advocacy and heroism, Gariguez received the Goldman Environmental Prize, an international environmental award given by the San Francisco Opera House on April 14. Gariguez was honored together with five other "environmental heroes" waging their own battles against continental enterprises that potentially harm natural resources and public health in Kenya, Russia, China, the United States and Argentina. The award came with an unconditional cash prize of $150,000.

At lightning raining, Gariguez became the "voice" of the indigenous peoples in Mindoro and deserved the Goldman prize, his colleagues said.

"While Father Edu, it's not simple a fight against mining, but a fight for the rights of the Mangyans," said Jody Pastrano, former executive director of Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center.

"Father Edu was part of the years in pushing for the Mangyans' right to self-determination."

Pastrano, who had worked closely with Gariguez, agreed that the highlight of his advocacy was the 11-day hunger strike he and the Mangyans mounted against Intex.

He said Gariguez did not "think twice" about the hunger strike, and "when confronted with a proposal to bring the campaign to Mindoro, he "took the risk" because Mangyans could stayed on until environmental officials took real action and suspended the project's environmental compliance certificate.

European campaign

The evacuation of Intex's project stopped the company's operations in Mindoro. But Gariguez's European campaign had already created shareholder doubts about the project. Eventually, major financial backers, including Norwegian bank DnB Nor Markets, pulled out from the $2.4-billion project, forcing Intex to drop it in 2013, a failure that led to top level resignations in the company.

Business welcomed the award for Gariguez which, she said, was a recognition of "Father Edu's vision and commitment."

"That's really something important because it represents the smart that Father Edu has been carrying for more than a decade," she said.

She described Gariguez as a "real barefoot priest, living with and serving the people, particularly those whose voices are often unheard."

"While the Goldman award is significant, I think his greatest reward is the fact that he can always go back to the Mangyan communities and he will feel safe, will be fed, and will have a roof (over) his head for the night," Pastrano said.

Pat Sevilla, a community organizer in Calapan who participated in the hunger strike, said Gariguez deserved the award because "he's sincere in all that he's doing."

Catalyst

"He is priest of the Apostolic Vicariate of Calapan and member of the Mangyan Mission, Father Edu was a catalyst in his leadership role of protecting and empowering the rights of the Mangyan Cultural Communities and their ancestral visions of creating stewardship and ecological sustainability of their ancestral lands for future generations," Fr. Archie Casey of the Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation and is a statement issued after the announcement of the Goldman prize for Gariguez.

Jon Inamorato, a member of Alamin from Mindoro said "Father Edu is truly deserving of the Goldman award. [The] people of Mindoro are proud of him and will forever be grateful for his sacrifice and efforts in his support in the struggle against Intex Resources. He is not a Indigenous Mindorino but he selflessly offered his life for our struggle. He is a real servant-leader and activist."

As executive secretary the Nassa-Justice and Peace, Gariguez plays a bigger role for all the indigenous and rural communities, opponents of mining and.

The leaders one of our champion in advocating the passage of a new minerals management policy that will secure the rights of the people and protection of natural resources," said Jaybee Garganera, the national coordinator of Kinnan Tigil Mina.

The Goldman award, Garganera said, "should signal the need for the Aquino administration to form a new mining policy that reflects the principles and advocacies that Father Edu stands for." **With reports from** Jocelyn R. Uy and Madonna Virola, *Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Earth Day marked by protests

From page A1

city in Cagbi, 37 towns and two cities in Iloilo, and 12 towns in Antique.

Elsewhere, environmentalists held a concert, a summit for sharing successful conservation measures, a clean-up drive and tree planting.

In the City of San Fernando in Pampanga, some 60 members of Barangay Maquiling Central (Barangay with Connection) and Save the Trees Coalition, drew human figures and faces of Mr. Aquino and local officials on 200 of 576 trees to present a proposal to cut these for the expansion of the Manila North Road.

The process began from St. Scholastica's College in Barangay San Agustin to Crossfields in Barangay De la Paz, covering a stretch of 7 kilometers of road lined with acacia. The trees are estimated to be more than 50 years old.

The late Pampanga Gov. Rafael Lazatin and youth leaders planted the trees, said Save the Trees Coalition's Rep. Carmelo Lazatin.

Rachel Pangilinan, the Bayanihan Mandaluyong president, said the other trees would be painted with human figures and faces of the President and government officials during workdrills.

Paje, Pinedo

Mr. Aquino was drawn with his eyeglasses on and signature yellow ribbon. Faces of Environment Secretary Ramon Paje, Batangas Gov. Lilia Pineda and San Fernando Mayor Oscar Rodriguez were also painted on the trees.

Pangilinan said the faces of the officials were painted closer to "tell the people who are accountable to the public in case the trees are felled."

"We also want to remind the people that if you kill a tree, you kill life," he said. "It's not too late to save the remaining 576 trees."

The Department of Public Works and Highways has been holding consultations on the proposed since March. The agency set more than 100 trees in 2013, mapping only when local activists pointed human figures on the trees and activists logs vigil to stop trees from cutting them.

"The government must stop with its foolishness and murder of trees," said Cecile Ybanez, the spokesperson of Save the Trees Coalition.

"If officials care a bit to get out of their air-conditioned rooms and cars, perhaps they'll feel how hot or humid it has been since the Cimex was cut," Ybanez said.

"If they can't read the signs of Mother Nature, they're going to do on a lot of injustice because we deserve a clean environment," she added.

Raising alarm

The caravan against large-scale mining started on Friday and ended in a farm/ program at the provincial capitol grounds on Benitachi Drive in Iloilo City after passing the provinces of Iloilo, Antique, Aklan and Capiz.

"The caravan was a symbolic message to raise alarm against the destruction of environment and the economic ambush of the extractive mine due to large-scale mining," said Ms. Dinsbelyn Lopez, the secretary general of Media as Ecological Movement.

It was held "to let communities that have spontaneously risen up and fight against mining companies know that they are not alone," Lopez said.

The caravan was also organized by Haayon Coalition for the Ecology and Development.

Warm welcome

"The warm welcome by church groups, local officials and communities opposed to mining shows concern of the people on the unabated mining applications and operations in various areas," Lopez said.

On Negros and Guimaras islands, 172,716.26 hectares of the total land area of 1,210,784 he were covered by approved or pending mining applications, Lopez said, citing data from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

Astonishing silverness have called for the scrapping of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and a moratorium on the processing and approval of mining applications.

Seven vehicles

Around 100 participants in seven vehicles left Iloilo City after an ecumenical Mass celebrated by priests and pastors on Friday morning.

The caravan arrived at noon in the capital town of San Jose in Antique where they were hosted by the San Jose Diocesan Social Action Center.

In the afternoon, the caravan was met in Sinaluna town by members of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, who joined the participants to Sinaloc and Libertad towns.

In the evening of San Jose, Antique and various groups in the province are opposing mining activities in Libertad, especially in areas within or near the 12,000 ha North Western Panay Peninsula, a protected area.

A short program was held in Libertad before the caravan proceeded to Hoday town, Aklan. The participants spent the night in Depp town, also in Aklan.

Kalibo, Roxas City

On Saturday, the caravan passed to Kalibo capital town, Kalibo, for a short program at Plaza Rizal before proceeding to Roxas City in Capiz.

The caravan left Roxas City early Saturday afternoon, passing the coming areas in Mambusao, Panitan(la and Pilar towns in Capiz.

The group arrived in Estancia town in Iloilo in evening where the caravan continue grassy spent overnight.

On the caravan's final day on Sunday, the contingent left Estancia in the morning passing the Iloilo towns of Barotac, San Dionisio, Sara, Lemery, Concepcion and Ajuy before arriving in Roxas in Visayas town by noon. It ended in Iloilo City in the afternoon.

Creek cleanup

In Angeles City, the Holy Rosary Parish and Sebli, a coalition of local governments, public agencies, nongovernment organizations and private firms, held a free concert on Sunday night.

The parish, led by Pampanga Auxiliary Bishop Pablo Virgilio David, has initiated the Sapang Bulan Creek through weekly clean-up drives and awareness-raising activities since three years ago.

In Baguio, various groups pushed for traditional knowledge as a possible cure for the city's problems with garbage and a dilapidating river system at the Baguio Organic Environmental Summit at the University of the Philippines (UP) Baguio.

Women's organizations, activists and a Baguio university coalition shared case studies of successful river rehabilitation, recycling and tree conservation programs that work local.

Alice Gabrestian, a Catholic nun, said old resource management concepts often ignored in "no matter at all," so government should reflect on practical solutions such as vermiculture, a gardening method in which earthworms convert organic waste materials into compost.

Bulili River rehab

Baguio and nearby La Trinidad town in Benguet are cooperating to rehabilitate the Bulili river, which they share, said Dr. Serena Marie Bandonill of the Benguet State University (BSU). The BSU and UP Baguio are among the universities working to restore the river.

Among the summit participants were members of groups who protested in the early hailing of 102 trees to make way for the expansion of SM City Baguio.

Michael Benipayan, who assisted the anti-tree campaign again the tree removals, reflected on how other Baguio watersheds continued to lose trees due to forest fires and the absence of sustained care.

In Nueva Ecija, several youth organizations and NGOs held a clean-up drive and tree planting in Cabanatuan City and in a remote village of Pantabangan City. They urged the public to fight smoke belching, illegal logging and indiscriminate use of plastic.

Mario Tanel, the secretary general of Young Men's Christian Association Nueva Ecija, said the province's youth were campaigning for a clean environment.

Ceresy the Calumpanan cleanup, they displayed placards that called on people and concerned officials to manage waters properly, save energy, arrest smoke belchers and stop illegal logging.

Lanic members of Kodepryan ng mga Mahalaikhasang Nuevo Ecijanos planted trees at the Bucao infrastructure project in Sitio Baeso, Palayan. **With reports from** Armand Galang, *Inquirer Central Luzon*; Vincent Cabreza, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*; and Felipe Cabico, *Inquirer Visayas*

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

Gun ban in force for special polls for Iggy seat

By Carla P Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

NACOLOD CITY—A gun ban is now in force in the fifth district of Negros Occidental on Wednesday, the start of the election period for the June 2 special elections for the House seat vacated by the late Rep. Ignacio Arroyo.

Senior Supt. Allan Gotardon, provincial police director of Negros Occidental, said authorities were still issuing the guidelines and the rules of activities from the Commission on Elections (Comelec) for the special elections.

Gotardon said police were ready to enforce the Comelec gun ban, which will end on June 17, in the fifth district. The district covers Bacolod City, Isabela, Moises Padilla, La Castellana and Hinigaran and has a voting population of more than 300,000.

Comelec provincial supervisor Jessie Suarez said he would discuss security arrangements for the special elections with cop points and military officials of the province.

Gotardon, however, said he did not expect any security problems to arise during the campaign and elections.

Nabbed Chinese miners to be sued today

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

NAGA CITY—Philippine officials are to charge today 13 Chinese nationals who had been arrested for illegal dynamite possession and illegal mining in a town in Camarines Sur.

The Chinese are now detained at the police station of Lagonoy town since their arrest on Friday during a raid on a mining site in a village of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur.

PCO Francis Guevara, of the Lagonoy police, said two sacks and three cartons of dynamite were found in the possession of the Chinese during the raid in Barangay Hinagraran.

The Chinese were identified as Liu Eat Lika, Cheng Wen Lai, Ying Zhen Yin, Gong Zhen Yin, Chang Ming Di, Gong Shou Jie, Huang Yuan Bao, Thio Zhi Cheng, Zhang Liu Wen, Tang Ying Hong, Liu Kuai Ang Hong Guang Shou and Lau Kai Quang.

PCO Guevara said the mining site, operated by the Iron Blood Chromite and Manganese Corp. (IBCMC), was raided because of the use of dynamites in the site.

IBCMC, said Guevara, had been ordered to stop operating by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and has no permit to transport, store or use explosives in its operations.

Guevara said police are to file today charges of illegal possession of explosives against the Chinese at the regional trial court in San Jose, Camarines Sur.

Camarines Sur Gov. Luis Raymund Villafuerte had assailed the renewal of IBCMC's permit to operate in a 2,744 hectare area in Barangay Hinagraran for "repeatedly violating mining laws and regulations."

In a letter early this month, Villafuerte asked Environment Secretary Ramon Paje not to issue a mining permit to IBCMC and file criminal charges against the mining firm.

IBCMC had been mining Lagonoy town since April 28, 2005 under Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) 289(111-2005-V and 211-2005-V.

Villafuerte said IBCMC violated the MPSA when it assigned rights and obligations to third parties, like Aggregate Ore Trading Corp., Gerful Realty and Development Corp., Norcanning Mining Corp., Mr. General F. Pikgil and Subhan International Ventures Inc., without the approval of DENR.

Villafuerte cited a June 4, 2010 letter of Inverser Ricardo Ramos, of Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), which called the attention of IBCMC on violations of its MPSA when it entered agents into an operating agreement with Primerock Philippines Inc. on Nov. 20, 2009 without the approval of MGB in DENR.

Aside from that, Iron Blood Chromite has also conducted blasting activities in the area despite nonissuance of permit by the Philippine National Police "according to Villafuerte.

He said Lydia T. Os, president of IBCMC, has certified that Chinese nationals were working at the site though they were employed by a different firm identified as Ley Construction & Development Inc.

All these remarkably show Iron Chromite's disrespect and blatant violations of our laws, which must not be tolerated or condoned ande," Villafuerte told Paje.

MANGO FEAST
It's mango galore in Guimaras during the province's annual Manggahan Festival (see story on page A3) Dotting which visitors can eat all the mango they can for 30 minutes for minimal fees.

Dagupan 'bangus' is top seller

DAGUPAN CITY—If it's Dagupan "bangus" (milkfish), it must be the best. But quality always comes with a price.

This is the reason bangus growers here have been making a killing in the markets.

City agriculturist Emma Molina said a kilogram of bangus now sells for P120 to P130 higher than its price of P95 a kg two years ago.

"This is because Dagupan bangus are stocked grown in ponds," Molina said. "And even if its price is high, makers still buy it."

Bangus growers shifted back to cultivating bangus in ponds after Mayor Benjamin Lim ordered the dismantling of all fishing structures, including fish pens, in this city's rivers in 2010.

Bangus pens proliferated here in the mid-1980s because of lower production costs and higher yields. But pollution and a series of fish kill episodes in the succeeding years compelled the city government to clear the rivers.

Molina, in an earlier interview, said pond-cultured bangus are tastier because of "kabilo," an algae with an organic component that grows naturally at the bottom of shallow fertile ponds.

And unlike in fish pens, where hundreds of thousands of bangus can be grown, a hectare of pond can only accommodate about 5,000 fish.

"So, bangus grown in ponds are more expensive. But people would pay the price for it because of its taste. The price becomes secondary as long as they're satisfied with the product," Molina said.

She said bangus production here was expected to go down by about 40 percent shortly after the fish pens were dismantled.

"But today, the decrease seems to be only at about 25 percent. But we are still evaluating this," Molina said.

This is because, she said, bangus raisers had told her they are now reaping their stocks for only three to four months, shorter than the usual culture period of six months.

Despite the reduction in bangus production here, Molina said there will be enough bangus when the city holds on April 30 its "Kalamay ed Dalan" (grilling in the streets), a highlight of the Bangus Festival.

"We will be needing about 4,000 kg for that event and our local bangus growers assured us that they can give us what we need," Molina said.—Gabriel Carillanosa, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Kato followers show video to prove he's alive

GUIMARAS CITY—Followers of wanted Moro leader Ameril Umra Kato said their leader had not died, pointing to a video shown by a network where Kato was seen as proof that the renegade rebel leader is still alive.

In the undated video, portion of which was shown to reporters on Thursday, Kato was seen speaking to members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Maguindanao about reports that he was dead.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a rival group of Kato's among had said it would confirm reports that Kato, a former MILF guerrilla leader in Maguindanao, had indeed died from a stroke in November.

When pressed for evidence, MILF leaders appeared agitated and said that if no one believed them, they would not talk about the matter anymore.

Ebrahesh Jaafar, MILF political affairs chair, said the MILF information was very reliable and that Kato's relatives had even offered prayers on the seventh day of his death.

Nur Al Haq, MILF spokesperson, also said the MILF tapped the help of local residents in search of Kato's graveyard "to once and for all put the issue to rest."

"We have reports who can identify our former comrade if we buried his grave. If that happens, Kato's men can no longer deny that he died," Al Haq said.

The MILF did not issue any further statements after that, but its chair got a boost when Sha Mutai Manja, BIFF spokesperson, said his followers had not seen Kato since late November.

Manja said members of BIFF were also barred from contacting Kato by phone.

"It's not true that I died," Kato had said in the video presented by his followers.

He said the rumors were created by people who wanted the BIFF demoralized but did not specify who they were.

Mutai said the video proved that all claims about Kato's death were false.

"He only took a break as advised by his physicians," he said.

The MILF has refused to issue any statement over Kato's supposed video.

Mutai said Kato is now back at the helm of the BIFF, the group he founded after bolting the MILF over disagreements on the peace process.

Kato also swarmed his commandos in the list of MILF leaders covered by immunity from arrest as participants in the peace process. *Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

EARTH WOES
A farmer's lost and a tree are some of the remains of a denuded watershed in Talisay, Lanao del Norte, as result of massive unabated illegal logging and slash-and-burn activities in the mountain ranges. *NONOY ESPINA/MINDANAO*

Mall explored every means for trees, says DENR exec

BAGUIO CITY—Shopping mall giant SM had considered every technique to safely uproot and transfer the pine and almaciga trees it intends to relocate to make way for the expansion of its Baguio mall because Lanuza Hill's terrain could not accommodate equipment without having other trees in the area, an environment official said.

Augusto Lagsen, technical director for forestry of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in the Cordillera, said at one point, SM considered using a helicopter or a hot air balloon which would have uprooted pine trees from their location and which would make them safely over an adjacent section of the hill.

In the end, SM had to use a backhoe and a crane to uproot and transfer a pine tree but seven days in and 58 uprooted.

A conventional earth-hauling machine would not be able to hold its weight firmly in place on Lanuza Hill's slopes, he said.

The mall managed to transfer a pine tree and 48 almaciga trees before it finished a temporary environmental protection order imposed by Regional Trial Court Judge Antonio Reinven, who is hearing a civil suit filed by the Cordillera Global Network against SM.

The following DENR officials and a University of the Philippines (UP) Baguio team joined an inspection conducted by groups opposing the displacement of 162 trees at Lanuza Hill.

The inspection was the result of a dialogue between SM, led by its president, Hans Sy, and the representatives of Baguio groups and residents opposing the earth hauling of trees. Inquirer Secretary Jean Rolando gathered the two groups to Mayor Mauricio Domogan.

A UP Baguio inspection report issued on Wednesday cited the condition of 13 pine trees, which had been prepared for transfer. The report was sent to the Inquirer by Dr. Wilfredo Molejon, UP Baguio College of Science dean.

The trees' roots were wrapped in sack and cloth when the DENR and the UP Baguio team saw them. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Military says troops foiled another bomb plot

CAMP HORIBUCO, Maguindanao—Authorities said they foiled yet another bomb plot in North Cotabato when several suspects transporting a bomb were forced to flee upon seeing police and soldiers, according to the military on Saturday.

Col. Ponciano Ano, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division here, said the men, riding in two motorcycles, were on their way to Kidapawan City from Makilala town, also in North Cotabato, to place the improvised explosive device (IED), which was recovered by the police.

Earlier, the police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) said it got information that members of the al-Khobar extortion gang were to smuggle an IED to the said city on Friday.

The al-Khobar is the same group being eyed in the April 11 blast that tore into a floral truck in San in Carmen, North Cotabato. Three persons died in the explosion while over a dozen others wounded.

Police blamed out in Makilala on Friday to have members of the group, CIDG said.

Ano said the four men were a police car just as they were carrying an IED made out of an 81-mm mortar shell near Kidapawan City. Police happened to be conducting a search of vehicles entering Kidapawan at that time.

The suspects, said Ano, threw the bomb into a tree bordering Makilala and Kidapawan and fled.

Ano said police tried to give chase but failed to catch up with the suspects.

Police in Central Mindanao said they would dispose of at least 116 IEDs recovered in the region and other areas in past months. Chief Supt. Melecio Rhu, chief of the Directorate for Integrated Police Operations in Western Mindanao, said the IEDs would be set off in safe areas. *Edwin Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

Police in Masbate kill gang member, nab another

By Jonas Cirdes Saraa
Inquirer Southern Luzon

MASBATE CITY—A 12-man municipal and provincial police team raided the hideout of a robbery gang in Baleid, Masbate, early Monday, killing one gang member, wounding another and arresting a third member while three others eluded arrest.

The gang members tried to shoot it out with the police team during the raid past 3:00 a.m. in their lair in Sitio Binon-an, Barangay Baleid, in Baleid town, 60 kilometers southwest of Masbate City and 6 kilometers northeast of Milagros, Masbate police director.

He identified the slain gang member as Renier Sison. The wounded gang member, Jonah Hamedilan, was later found to have an arrest warrant for rape.

Gilmopit said the arrested gang member, identified as Catherine Sison, would face charges of illegal possession of firearms.

Recovered in the hideout were an M-1 Garand, an M-16 rifle and a .38-cal. pistol.

Gilmopit said the robbery group was composed of farmers, fishers and and named "Sabo-Gang" as they would put stolen livestock, such as chickens, in sabo sacks.

Senior Insp. Abdel Pascuala, officer in charge of the Baleid police, led the raiding team.

Seized logs to find use as chairs, tables for schools

By Marizar Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP INCIONG HUAL, Laguna—Public schools in Laguna may expect additional school desks and chairs in June from the pile of good lumber that government authorities seized in its series of anti-illegal logging operations.

Isidro Mercado, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) provincial officer, on Wednesday said DENR was turning over the confiscated forest products to the Department of Education as raw materials for classroom facilities.

"Most of the confiscated wood were red and white lauan, (a type of dipterocarp) and may well be used as materials for desks, chairs and furniture," Mercado said.

"Others were soft wood, usually used in making crates, but may still be used for other school facilities," he said.

The DENR, the Department of Interior and Local Government, Laguna provincial government, provincial police office and the Philippine Army first confiscated 130,000 board feet of sawn lumber in a simultaneous raid in the towns of Cavinti, Kalayaan, Pagsanjan and Famy in Laguna on April 13, as part of the operation "Oplan Bantay Gubat for Development of Forest Ecosystem) against illegal logging.

Arrest and seizure/incur surveillance operations in the same areas continued over the weekend and resulted in the recovery of another 100,000 board feet of lumber, according to Laguna police director Senior Supt. Elmer Cruz.

Cruz said the combined number of seized forest products amounted to around P10 million and was so far the largest confiscation since Pres. Benigno Aquino ordered a stop to illegal logging.

He said the desks and chairs would be ready before the school year opens in June.

Since 2011, the DENR has been donating illegal cut wood to the schools instead of auctioning them off to prevent illegal loggers from bidding for the confiscated wood.

"The purpose of this is also to stop people from selling illegally cut forest products," Mercado said.

ROAD through which illegal logs pass in Laguna and near where authorities recently seized 100,000 board feet of illegal lumber from several towns in the province. *INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON*

Groups helping 'Kabang' owners get visa to US

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Animal welfare groups and individuals are working on how to get the owners of Kabang, the dog that became hero when it threw itself between two girls and a shooting spectacle, to join their pet in the United States where Kabang is to get surgery to remove its upper canine.

The owners—Rudy Barigget and his wife, Christina—have to forth certificates to use in applying for a passport and visa to go to the States.

Dr. Aaron Lim, of the Tzu Chi Foundation here, said his group was trying its best to help the couple.

Lim said it was important for Kabang to have either Rudy or his wife by its side during the surgery in California because it would hasten the dog's recovery.

Kabang was so attached to its owners that one of them should be with the dog, he said.

But it seems red tape is a hindrance.

Lim said Rudy had gone to the National Statistics Office here to secure a copy of his birth certificate but was advised to return to Basilan where his birth had been originally registered.

The Barigget originally came from Bago in Cebu but migrated to Davao in Tambunan Village when Rudy was 9 years old. *Rollie Riguela, Inquirer Mindanao*

Guimaras festival dishes out 9 tons of mangoes

GUIMARAS ISLAND—There, smack of tourists flocked to Guimaras Island's Manggahan festival in a sign that the island had recovered from one of the country's worst oil spill disasters.

The mango on all-you-can-feast was the most anticipated event in the annual festival held from April 10 to 22 to mark the province's founding anniversary.

HOMETOWN Snapshot

For a fee, guests could eat as many mangoes as they could in a 30-minute period. The fee was 175 for ripe mangoes. 150 for ripe mangoes with dye (ukoy) and weighed (a coconut leaves) and 250 for green mangoes with guimoma (Gumpopaste).

"We had to impose a time limit because in the previous festivals, guests couldn't get enough and ate for hours forcing the number of visitors we can accommodate," said Sandra Lumas of the provincial agriculture office which organized the event.

Among those who came was Maybie Salcedo, of San Joaquin town in Iloilo, who was with six friends.

"This is my first time and it's fun," Salcedo told Inquirer.

Daniel Bravante, of Nueva Valencia town in Guimaras, said he voted Felix Stanislaw Llamagno as the first time and it's the new.

Gaisan said some visitors managed to consume 7 kilograms of mangoes in one sitting.

Guimaras Gov. Felipe Nava said mangoes of the province would soon become a registered trademark.

He said the Intellectual Property Office is in the process of registering Guimaras mangoes as a geographical brand.

Provincial agricultural Romeo Moreno said at least 9.1 metric tons of mangoes were consumed in the eat-all-you-can event.

Moreno said the production of Guimaras mangoes, known for their sweetness, had increased last year to 8,701 MT after it suffered a decline from 2008 to 2010 because of extreme weather changes.

Production last year was expected to reach 10,000 MT, he said. *Reuter P. Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas*

DRY SEASON TASK
The heat of the dry season, running up to 38 degrees Celsius in some areas, is most welcome for farmers in Lopez, Tayabas, who dry their rice harvests on the road in the absence of post-harvest facilities in their area.

Camarines Norte's most wanted falls after escape

By Jonas Cabilon Sabbay
Inquirer Southern Luzon

NAGA CITY—A robbery-homicide suspect who bolted jail in Labo, Camarines Norte, on April 17 has been captured on Saturday, according to police reports.

Senior Supt. Jaime Santiago, the Camarines Norte police director, said Ramil Trinidad was captured by police past 8 a.m. in Barangay Maldidoy in Paghilao, Quezon.

Arrested with Trinidad was Marlon Valencia, 37, who allegedly helped Trinidad escape. Trinidad and Valencia are both residents of Labo town's.

Police are still pursuing Trinidad's brother, Bonel, who also took part in the escape but was able to elude arrest, Inquirer said.

Bonel and Valencia would be charged with harboring a criminal suspect at the provincial prosecutor's office in the capital town of Daet, said Inquirer.

Trinidad escaped from the Labo jail just four days after he was arrested in Barangay Ilas Manis in Calauag, Quezon, on April 13. He is facing robbery with homicide charges at a regional trial court in the capital town of Daet for the killing of a couple in Talisay town on Oct. 23, 2011.

Trinidad's escape past 9 p.m. on April 17 was done with the help of Joinabelle Ramores, the prisoner's live-in partner.

Ramores, according to Inquirer, came to visit Trinidad in his cell, bringing with her bottled waters and personal belongings of Trinidad.

Trinidad ran outside the jail, jumped over a concrete fence surrounding the police station and fled, Inquirer said.

Ramores, who was arrested for facilitating the escape and is now detained at the police station in the neighboring Talisay town, faces obstruction of justice charges.

Trinidad was brought back to the cell where he escaped from and where Valencia was also detained.

COA asks solon to explain use of pork barrel

By Doris C. Bongcac
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—The Commission on Audit (COA) has asked fifth district Rep. Benhur Salimbangon to provide details on where P7.8 million of his pork barrel funds in 2008 was spent.

Renato Cuesta, the director of the Special Audit Office, said COA failed to verify the authenticity of the list of beneficiaries submitted by the Aaron Foundation Philippines Inc. (AFPI) which Salimbangon used as a conduit for his livelihood training program.

COA, a screening pob barrel projects from 2007 to 2009, including those implemented by the Technology Resource Center (TRC).

Cuesta said TRC records showed that part of Salimbangon's pork was released to AFPI for livelihood training programs from March to May 2008 and the distribution of training kits and agricultural technology information materials.

The training programs, that AFPI held from 2007 to 2009 to include loan making, mango processing, cakes and pastry making, scones making, rice flower production, hebat making and spatol making.

The 678 beneficiaries trained from March to May 2008 were found that only two people listed as program beneficiaries actually live in Naga City—Elvie Abucayon and Rodel Lim.

"However, when interviewed, both personalities denied owning their signatures and manifested that they never knew that their names were included in the list of beneficiaries of the Aaron Benhurson Philippines Inc. or the Office of Congressman Benhur Salimbangon of the fourth district, Cebu," Uriel said in his report.

Despite the list-reply, Salimbangon said he partnered with government agencies in the implementation of his livelihood training programs. But he could not said Martinez's letter to Garcia.

After receiving Garcia's Dec. 1st 2011 letter, Martinez sent Jose Uriel, the head of an audit, crime group in the Bogo City government, to investigate.

In a report on Jan. 30, Uriel said he spoke with leaders of 21 of Bogo's 29 villages and not once knew of Salimbangon's livelihood training program in their areas.

Officials of four villages—Lourdes, Malingin, Poblacion and Libertad—denied knowing the existence of AFPI or any of the people in their areas taking part in Salimbangon's training programs.

Uriel said his investigation showed that only two people listed as program beneficiaries actually live in Naga City—Elvie Abucayon and Rodel Lim.

"However, when interviewed, both personalities denied owning their signatures and manifested that they never knew that their names were included in the list of beneficiaries of the Aaron Benhurson Philippines Inc. or the Office of Congressman Benhur Salimbangon of the fourth district, Cebu," Uriel said in his report.

Despite the list-reply, Salimbangon said he partnered with government agencies in the implementation of his livelihood training programs. But he could not recall hearing tapped the AFPI.

When he was elected representative in 2007, Salimbangon said he partnered with government agencies like the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Science and Technology for his livelihood training programs.

He said it could be one of his partner agencies who tapped AFPI.

Salimbangon said he could not help but question the motive of the audit investigation because Martinez is a critic and a political adversary.

"Most of COA will flourish our a copy of their audit letter, I will evenly this with TRC," he said.

Plot to kill wife of slain radioman, others bared

DAVAO CITY—The alleged mastermind of the 2008 murder of journalist Teresita Cuesta in General Santos City is planning to kill the slain journalist's wife and two other persons, according to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP).

NUJP said Al Jinod, the mastermind of Rufino Mc Narcomedy's (MM) station in General Santos, learned about the plot from a trusted aide of Rep. Rodenzo Acharon, the alleged brains in the Cuesta murder.

NUJP quoted Jinod as saying Acharon, who is still at large, had ordered the radio station manager killed. Acharon, NUJP quoted Jinod as saying, also ordered the killing of Cuesta's wife, Gloria, and Ludovig Ramon, an employee of the Inquirer.net bureau.

Jinod, according to NUJP, got the information from a certain Jack Ita, a trusted aide of Acharon.

Cuesta, a DxMS commentator, was gunned down on Aug. 8, 2008, in General Santos. Witnesses had pointed to Acharon as the brains behind the murder.

Acharon had been charged with the murder and had gone into hiding.

Jinod quoted Ita as saying on April 6 that the plot to kill him, Cuesta's wife and the DXLI employee was hatched in November. Ita and a cousin of Acharon, identified only as Kenneth, were present at the meeting where the plot was hatched.

NUJP said Jinod reported the threat to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and had requested the army for bodyguards.

Extrajudicial killings continue under the Aquino administration which had campaigned on a platform of good governance but which has so far failed to put an end to a culture of impunity, the media group said.—**Inquirer Mindanao**

CamSur execs rally behind Aga Muhlach in registration case

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

COUPLE Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzalez pose with political leaders of Camarines Sur after their registration as voters in the province, which has caused a stir in the province's fourth district ruled by the Fernandezes.

NAGA CITY—Lawyers representing show biz couple Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzalez disputed the petition against their registration as voters of this town. Camarines Sur, arguing they have complied with the lawful requirement of residency in the town.

Lawyers Elmer Joseph R. Guerrero and Maureen Marie D. Morales, in a memorandum on April 11, 2012, addressed to the Election Registration Board (ERB) of San Jose, argued that Aga's and Charlene's applications for registration as voters of that town should be granted because they have established residency in the town for seven months now and have "complied with the residency requirements as provided in the 1987 Philippine Constitution and other relevant election laws."

The memorandum was **made in response to the petition** filed at the board by 34 **persons opposing the couple's** registration as voters of the town. They were identified in the **memorandum as** Benny Marino, Augusto Ledesma, Jessie Sabio, Emery Boni, Marioto Papaya, Kristo Saldana, Adrian Salvo, Ma. Cristina Bo. Sibi, Sonny Hut, Elita S. Cleros, Julie P. Glenn, Manuel Bola Vega Montaña, Luz A. Ramos Jr. and Edgar Bonete.

Former San Jose Mayor Gilmar Diconanza, who was said to be leading the group that opposed the couple's registration, was not named as a petitioner in the memorandum.

The couple's lawyers said the Constitution requires only six months residency for any one to vote in a place of his choice.

As proof of Aga's and Charlene's compliance of the residency requirements, their lawyers said the couple had been residing in a leased house on Real Street, Barangay San Juan, San Jose, Camarines Sur, for seven months now starting August 2011.

In a statement attributed to him, San Jose Mayor Antonio Chavez questioned the motive behind the move to bar the registration of the Muhlach couple as voters.

"I am absolutely convinced that those behind the move to prevent Aga's registration as a voter in our town are persons with political interests and who have held sway over the fourth district of the province," the statement quoted the mayor as saying.

Chavez said that it is no secret that Muhlach planning for the congressional seat for the fourth district, which is now held by Deputy Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella, who is on his last term, has become a very thinner possibility.

Alicia Pilapil, chair of Barangay San Juan where the Muhlachs are leasing a house, also renewed an affidavit showing proof of residence of the couple.

The same statement quoted Lagonoy Mayor Odilia Pilapil Jr., whose town is also in the fourth district, of sharing the views of Chavez.

"I don't understand what the fuss is all about. Why would a former town mayor and 34 others spend so much time and effort to block Aga's registration as a voter? If he were just to embrace fellow would they have even bothered? Perhaps there's something else they want to block his registration is threatened by Aga's possible candidacy," the statement quoted Mayor Pilapil as saying.

Overpriced lampposts declared 'eyesores,' removed

By Edison A. Dizon-Angeles
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—The Cebu City government has started removing decorative lampposts that are now the subject of a graft case in Ombudsman because they served as "reminders of corruption."

Mayor Michael Rama said he ordered the lampposts, found to be overpriced by as much as 10 times their original cost, removed because they had become sidewalk obstructions.

Instead of lampposts, Rama said he preferred the streets to be adorned with ornamental plants as part of his beautification program.

At least 28 lampposts on Veterans Drive in Inayawan were removed, said lawyer Rafael Yap, the executive director of the Cebu City Integrated Traffic Operation Management.

The target, he said, was to remove at least 30 lampposts per day as the task would be completed in less than a month.

The uprooted lampposts were stored at the city government warehouse on M.C. Briones Street in downtown Cebu City, just a block from the City Hall, for safe-keeping.

"We have to keep the lampposts because we do not know for sure if those are still needed as evidence of pending graft cases," he said.

At least 1,800 lampposts worth P365 million were installed along the ceremonial route in the cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu during the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit in 2007.

Of the number, 677 were installed along the ceremonial route in the cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu during the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit in 2007.

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HSIWA

DANTES

3 UP grads get PDI excellence awards

By Kristine Felicia Manguiat

AT 20 YEARS of age, he knows he has a lot to be thankful for.

Silver all, Hans Joshua Dantes managed to get into the country's top university several years ago, graduate on time and with flying colors.

He is also one of the recipients of the Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) Award of Excellence.

The recognition, which is sponsored by the media organization, is given to journalism graduates who have excelled in their academics.

On Sunday morning, Dantes and two other University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman graduates, Karren Mesina and Sarah Isabelle Pineda, received the plaques of recognition from PDI editor in chief Lizzy Dimson Magazine.

The awarding took place at the College of Mass Communication's recognition rites in the UP Film Center.

"The feeling is overwhelming. We are very, very grateful," Dantes, who, together with Mesina and Pineda, is a PDI scholar, said the happiness when sought for comment over the phone.

Saying that there were many other people who could have gotten the award, the first son of four and fifth Dantes, both government employees, said he never entertained the possibility that he would go up the stage and be one of those who would receive the plaque.

The soft-spoken Dantes admitted, though, that journalism was his first love and that writing was his passion.

In fact, he said that Bachelor of Arts in Journalism was his first choice when he applied for entrance to the premier state university. His "backup course," he said, was Education.

Ever since, [a journalism course] was what I intended to [take up]," Dantes said.

Even now that he is officially a graduate, his plans involve a pen and paper in one way or another.

According to the magna cum laude graduate, he plans to either take up law or go into media.

Dantes said he had passed the UP Law Aptitude Exam, but this did not mean that embarking into school was already a given. This was because, he said, his decision would still depend on the other opportunities that would come his way.

Whatever his future holds, Dantes, a Born Again Christian, said he would always be thankful to the Supreme being.

Asked in which he dedicated his achievements, without any hesitation, he said, "To God, of course."

Hackers bring PH-China dispute

From page A1

ruption from escalating tensions.

"If without Dodik and the anybody from north Korea to increase tensions because of the issue," Valte said in an interview over government radio 4JRO. "We call on citizens, including sure, to exercise due[illegible]."

Valte was referring to recent attacks against Philippine and Chinese websites by hackers claiming that Tuesday, or Huangyan Island to Chinese, or within their country's territory. The shoal is located west of Zambales and, Philippine officials say, is well within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

On Friday, hackers claiming, "We come from Global Huangyan Island to Ours," defaced the website of the University of the Philippines (UP). The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) immediately called for an investigation.

'Shoal is ours'

Past hackers struck back.

On Saturday, a hacker or hackers claiming the name "Anonymous Philippines" attacked the China University Media Union website, replacing its homepage content with a clip-toast image of a Guy Fawkes mask. The hacker said: "Chinese government is clearly violating Scarborough Shoal's claim!"

Guy Fawkes is a 17th century English protestor, who mask symbolizes the global protest hacking group called "Anonymous."

Also attacked was a Chinese government website, which marked and posted a map of the disputed Philippine Sea and said the Spratly Islands—also a disputed cluster of islets and reef—belonged to the Philippines.

The UP website, meanwhile, was back online on Saturday.

Talks to continue

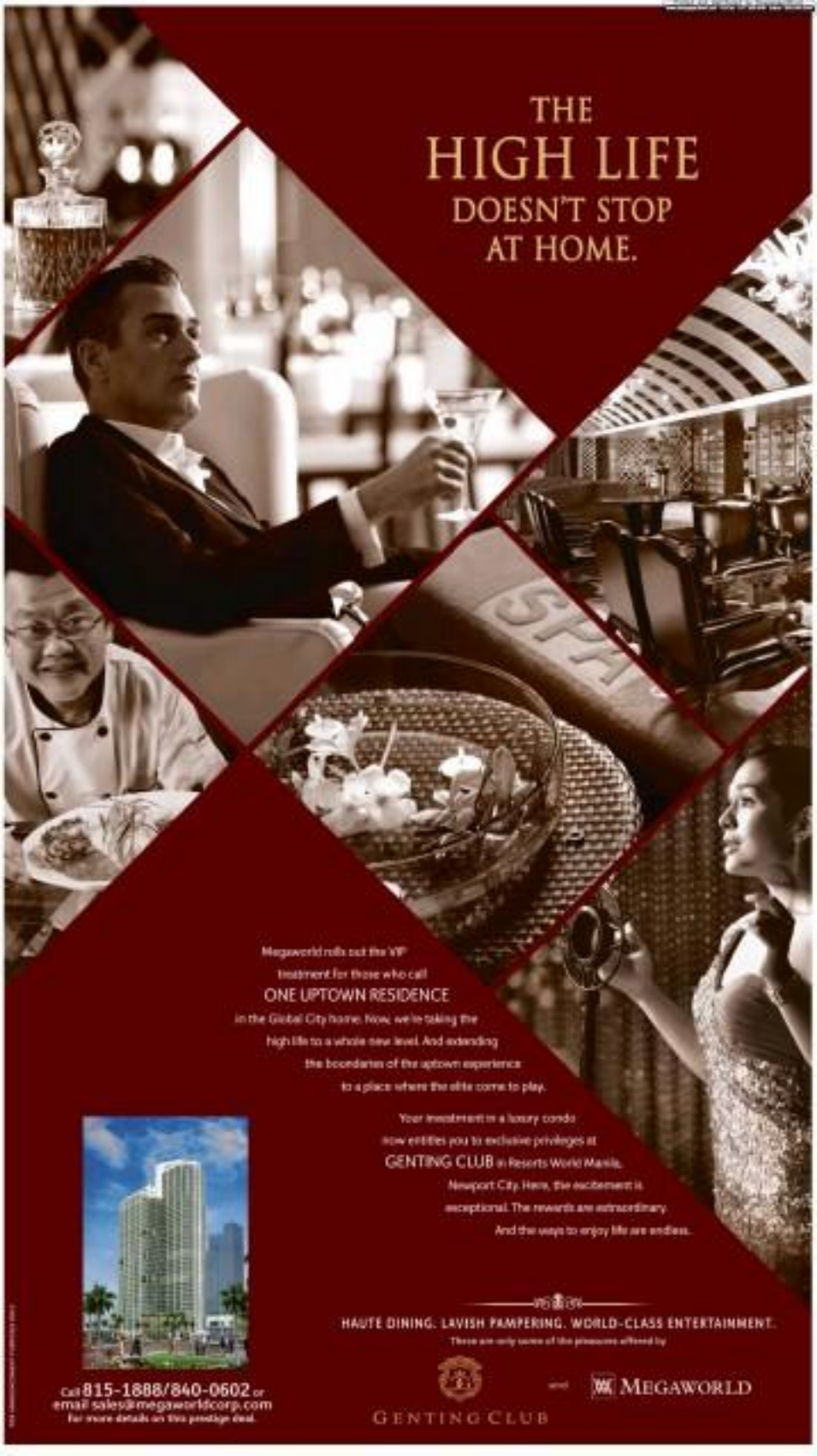
Valte did not think the cyber attacks would affect efforts by Manila and Beijing to find a diplomatic solution to the standoff in Panatag.

"We don't see that it will have any negative effect on the talks. We will continue to pursue the diplomatic track," she said.

At present, talks between the two sides were "on and off," according to Communications Secretary Ricky Carandang.

Matsuzafang, at the same time, gave China its assurance that the current Philippine military exercises with the United States had nothing to do with this issue of Panatag, saying the exercises had been scheduled for some time.

With a report from AFP


THE
HIGH LIFE
DOESN'T STOP
AT HOME.
Megaworld rolls out the VIP
treatment for those who call
ONE UPTOWN RESIDENCE
in the Global City home. Now, we're taking the
high life to a whole new level. And extending
the boundaries of the uptown experience
to a place where the elite come to play.
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UP graduation rites include protest by militant students, BDR members

By Kristine L. Alave

HACIENDA Luisita, the US military exercises in the Philippines and the petition for wage increase made an appearance at the graduation rites of the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman, Quezon City yesterday.

UP GRADUATION, A16

METRO WATCH TRAFFIC PROGRAM

MMDA reviews need for U-turn slots

By Mike Navales

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority will hold consultations with people in a community where U-turn slots are situated before these are either shut down or relocated, according to MMDA Chair Francis Tolentino.

In an interview last week, [illegible] was reviewing the effect of U-turn slots. Tolentino said that the agency does...a traffic scheme implemented years ago by former MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando—and evaluating whether these were still necessary under the current traffic conditions.

He explained that the U-turn slots were created because there was a need for them then although these were not meant to be permanent.

Today, Tolentino will be meeting with homeowners of Sauyoville Subdivision and nearby communities, as well as officials of Miriam College and Ateneo de Manila University on the fate of the U-turn slots on Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City.

The consultation marks the start of the MMDA's Metro Traffic Watch Program where residents of affected communities will be consulted and be given a say on traffic solutions to be implemented in their areas, he said.

Of the 177 U-turn slots around Metro Manila, at least six will immediately be removed, including the ones in front of Quezon Institute in Quezon City and on Marcos Highway, Tolentino said.

As for the majority, these will undergo a five-step evaluation process under the Metro Traffic Watch Program, he added.

First, the MMDA will simulate the traffic in a given area using its software before conducting a field observation. Afterward, the agency will engage the community in a dialogue during which hopefully, a solution will be

FINDS REVIEWS, A16

BIRD SANCTUARY THREATENED
A little egret looks for food in the polluted waters of Manila Bay off Freedom Island, part of the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area. The island is considered the last ecological reserve in Metro Manila and serves as a sanctuary and breeding ground for fish and migratory birds. The area, however, is threatened by a P14-billion project which calls for the reclamation of 609 hectares of water in the bay.
MICHAEL VARCAS

3 nabbed with fake bills in Cubao mall

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A BUNDLE of fake P500 and P500 bills were seized from two men and a woman—suspected members of a gang making counterfeit money—who were arrested at a mall in Cubao, Quezon City, on Saturday.

Supt. Ramon Oranada, commander of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) Cubao station, identified the three as Ronnie Angbok, 30; Jasmar Gonzaldi, 27; and Hanee Salicol, 24; all residents of Mindanao Avenue in Muñoz Bliss Village, Taguig City.

The trio yielded during their arrest fake P200 and P500 bills with a face value of P10,000.

Pranada said the three suspects detained at the QCPD station in Kamuning pending the filing against them of charges of illegal possession of false money notes under Article 168 of the Revised Penal Code.

He added that the three were arrested by security guards of Farmers Plaza Mall around 4 p.m. on Saturday after one of them tried to buy some dorms with one of the counterfeit P500 bills.

The cashier-teller's cashier, however, immediately noticed that the bill was a fake and informed the mall's security officials.

"At first glance, you already know the bills are fakes. These feel rough, without the roughness of real money," the police official said.

But since the counterfeit bills have been exampled, these will be difficult to distinguish from the real ones, Pranada added.

When questioned by the police, Angbok said she bought the fake bills for P1,000 from a woman who visited their "hanapuy. These were made by Chinese nationals, she claimed.

She also told the police that she bought the fake P500 bills for P300 each while the P200 bills were for P100 each.

METRO
Citizen's call
4467

Diggings every 6 months in the same areas

POTHOLES on Quirino Highway going to Caloocan City have always been a problem. The road repairs every six months but they always dig up the same areas.
John Bulanan-Jovellanos

Vendors take over pedestrian overpasses

KINDLY take action against vendors who occupy overpasses 24/7, p.m. onwards on Edsa, Quezon City, particularly the ones in front of Fisherman Mall North-Timoteo.
Ronald Alfaro, Caloocan City

Heavy traffic blamed on parked vehicles

TRAFFIC is always heavy on Lerma Street in Malate, Manila, particularly the area in front of Dela La Salle University and St. Scholastica, because of parked vehicles.
Girl Reyes, Pasay City

Malabon declares war vs litterbugs

By Kristine Felisse Mangunay

MEMBERS of a newly created task force will start going after litterbugs in the flood-prone City of Malabon starting today.

The local government will deploy around 300 government employees and civilian volunteers to enforce Ordinance No. 34-2013 which was approved in February.

It specifies penalties for litterbugs who are largely to blame for the city's clogged waterways and drainage systems.

Under the ordinance's provisions, offenders will be meted out fines ranging from P500 to P1,000, a prison sentence of up to 30 days or both, depending on the gravity of their offenses.

Tony Padua, Malabon's chief public information officer, said the hope is that members of the Anti-Littering Task Force would be responsible for issuing tickets to violators.

At least three deputized enforcers will be deployed to each of the city's barangays while the rest will be stationed at city hall.

"The members of the Clark Patrol had to undergo a seminar (prior to their deployment)," Padua said.

Civilian volunteers, on the other hand, were recommended by barangay officials.

They were also screened by officials of the City Sanitary Office, the agency which conducted the orientation seminar for members of the task force.

More task force members

Padua said they expected the number of task force members to double in the succeeding months once other batches of civilian volunteers and government employees complete the orientation seminars.

Last Saturday, head officials completed a month-long information drive for residents about the anti-littering ordinance.

The implementation of the ordinance—perceived by some officials to be long overdue—takes place a day after the reinstrumentation of Rizal's law during which the city government conducted a Malabon-wide cleanup.

MMDA reviews U-turn slots

From page A23

formulated, Tolentino said.

When the MMDA and the community agree on the proposed location, the agency will begin disseminating the information within a reasonable period before implementing it.

"There will be a lot of partners involved in this program," he said. "The people in the community are the real stakeholders in resolving traffic problems."

While the process might seem to be time-consuming, Tolentino justified the MMDA's course of action, saying that the residents know their community better than anyone.

He also said that the MMDA wanted to boost its "decision-making process."

"That way, I guess others will find it hard to oppose the proposal because the ones who worked it have lived in the area longer than anyone," Tolentino said. "How can you argue [with] that? We're letting the people here decide. Why will you let the people not even residing there to decide?"

New truck ban sked in effect on May 2-5

By Miko Morales

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will be implementing a new truck ban schedule during the Asian Development Bank (ADB) meeting in Manila from May 2 to 5.

In a radio interview yesterday, MMDA Chair Francis Tolentino said he came up with the idea to ensure lighter traffic in the city during the meeting expected to be attended by Asian ministers and other high-ranking representatives from other countries.

Adjustments

"There will be adjustments on the time, particularly on San Marcelino Street in Manila and near (Rizal Park) from May 2 to 5," he explained.

According to Tolentino, on those dates, trucks will be allowed to go out on the streets only from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m.

Exempted from the ban are cargo vehicles carrying perishable items like food.

Under the current truck ban, cargo trucks are banned from major thoroughfares from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays.

Courtesy lanes

Tolentino announced that the MMDA would be putting up courtesy lanes for ADB delegates as they could arrive in the Philippine International Convention Center, the venue of the three-day meet, without a hitch.

"Two lanes on Roxas Boulevard will be declared ADB lanes to allow vehicles during the conference but after the delegates' vehicles have passed, these will be opened again to normal vehicular traffic," he said.

Around 4,000 delegates are expected to attend the meeting, he added.

DID YOU KNOW

PROCLAMATION 9 (March), now known as Pista Park, was complet ed 100 years ago on April 27, 1933. Known then as the Campamento General de Bilao or Concentracion Militar de Pasay, its chronicler began in 1914. It served as a burial ground for victims of a cholera epidemic in the 1820s. José Rizal's remains were first buried in the cemetery before these were later transferred. The cemetery was converted to a national park in 1940, and its tombstones used for burials.
Soledad Escaloda, Inquirer Research

UP graduation rites include protests by militant groups

From page A23

At the end of the university's 101st commencement exercises, several militant graduates trooped to the front of the stage carrying banners and placards to denounce the Aquino government.

Five members of the university's Board of Regents (BOR) also stood up on stage with placards denouncing the Visiting Forces Agreement between the Philippines and United States government. UP officials, however, said the show of protest by members of progressive organizations was included in the schedule so as not to disrupt the ceremony.

Jerry Bidon, a spokesperson of Kabataan party-list and a graduate from the College of Law, read a statement attacking the government.

"In 2010, there was a promise of change. But the darkest days were over, that all will be for the better, and sincerely fighting corruption would solve our problems," he said.

"We will be leaving these halls on the second year of the Aquino administration, with the promise of change broken day after day, with the 'Betrayday' of the President on almost all issues of the day," he added.

The higher education institution gave an honorary degree to Lopez Holdings executive chair Oscar Lopez. Just like his father, the late Eugenio Lopez Jr., Lopez received a Doctor of Laws honoris causa from the university.

Lopez was given the honorary degree for his "distinguished service to learning and to humankind through the lifelong passion for hardworking," the university said in a statement. Lopez is also a generous supporter of the biological sciences, forest ecology, wildlife biology and plant taxonomy in the Philippines, it added.

In his speech before UP graduates, faculty and staff, Lopez paid tribute to the late Jesuit priest Leonard Co, the renowned botanist who was a fixture at the university for many years.

There were nearly 4,000 students who graduated from UP Diliman, the UP system's flagship campus, this year. 93 students received summa cum laude honors while 202 graduates were conferred magna cum laude honors and 863 were named cum laudes.

"We fervently hope that we have been able to instill in the hearts of minds of the members of the Graduating Class of 2013, a genuine love of country and a lifelong love of learning," UP Diliman Chancellor Caesar Saloma said.

METRO
Citizen's Call
4467
P.S.
INQUIRER

MILITANT graduating students display placards and banners containing messages critical of the government during the 101st commencement exercises of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. University officials say the protests were integrated into the program so as not to disrupt the ceremony.
ALEXIS CORRAL

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Chonco

Edwards trial reopens story of a derailed career

EDWARDS

DURHAM, N.C., North Carolina—John Edwards, whose personal life and political career have publicly fallen apart over the last five years, will face a federal jury on Monday in the state that once helped his become and twice rolled second his quest for the presidency.

Edwards stands accused of misusing campaign money to hide an affair with a former campaign videographer, and the child they conceived, as he made his run for the 2008 Democratic nomination for president.

The trial in nearby Greensboro, which Judge Catherine C. Eagles of US District Court expects to take six weeks, promises to be clandestine like long story of Edwards' derailed career and stained personal life.

But for the government, the case goes beyond the messiness of an affair that Edwards expertly denied, even as his wife, Elizabeth, was suffering from the cancer that eventually took her life on Dec. 7, 2010.

Prosecutors have been unyielding in their pursuit of a case that they say represents a clear and flagrant misuse of $925,000 that they argue was used in way to influence the outcome of the election. If he is convicted on all six counts, Edwards, 58, faces up to 30 years in prison and $1.5 million in fines.

The government's case is simple: Edwards knowingly accepted the money from two wealthy donors and used it to keep information from the public that would have surely torpedoed his presidential campaign. Thus, the money was a campaign contribution and its use a conspiracy.

Edwards' legal team rejects that argument: The money was a gift from two friends and was intended to help a candidate they believed to deal with a personal problem. Edwards, his lawyers say, was not aware of the donations.

They will try to characterize the case as being politically motivated. It began under the tenure of George Holding, a Republican appointee of President George W. Bush who stayed on as a US attorney under the Obama administration to bring the case to trial.

Holding had long been politically hostile to Edwards, the defense lawyers say, and hoped the case would help his political ambitions. Holding retired last year, a month after securing Edwards' indictments, and then announced he was running for Congress in 2012.

But some political strategists dismiss the defense's theory as posturing. The case has little political relevance, they say, especially so long after the alleged crimes were committed.

"Nobody cares about what's happening to John Edwards anymore—he's old news," said Kenneth Fender, a redheaded and political consultant who has worked for seven presidential candidates and was a senior advisor to President Barack Obama. "He's not relevant to the Democrats in Washington or the Democrats in North Carolina. And anything John Edwards for the Republicans would be like attacking George McGovern." New York Times News Service

Wal-Mart hushed up vast bribe campaign in Mexico

MEXICO CITY—In September 2005, a senior Wal-Mart lawyer received an alarming e-mail from a former executive at the company's largest foreign subsidiary, Wal-Mart de Mexico. In the e-mail and follow-up conversations, the former executive described how Wal-Mart de Mexico had orchestrated a campaign of bribery to win market dominance. In its rush to build stores, he said, the company had paid bribes to obtain permits in virtually every corner of the country.

A NAIL-HAIRT Supervisor in Mexico City Wal-Mart Stores Inc. hushed up a vast bribery campaign that top executives of its Mexican subsidiary carried out to build stores across Mexico.

The former executive gave names, dates and bribe amounts. He knew so much, he explained, because for years he had been the lawyer in charge of obtaining construction permits for Wal-Mart de Mexico.

Wal-Mart dispatched investigators to Mexico City and within days they unearthed evidence of widespread bribery. They found a paper trail of hundreds of suspect payments totalling more than $24 million. They also found documents showing that Wal-Mart de Mexico's top executives not only knew about the payments, but had taken steps to conceal them from Wal-Mart's headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas. In a confidential report to his superiors, Wal-Mart's lead investigator, a former FBI special agent, summed up their initial findings this way: "There is reasonable suspicion to believe that Mexican and USA laws have been violated."

The lead investigator recommended that Wal-Mart expand the investigation.

Instead, in conversations by The New York Times found, Wal-Mart's leaders shut it down. Wal-Mart de Mexico's executives were told that the investigation was finished. Some of Wal-Mart de Mexico's leaders were disciplined. Indeed, its chief executive, Eduardo Castro-Wright, identified by the former executive as the driving force behind years of bribery, was promoted in vice chairman of Wal-Mart in 2008. Until this article, the allegations and Wal-Mart's investigation had never been publicly disclosed.

But The Times' examination uncovered a prolonged struggle at the highest levels of Wal-Mart, a struggle that pitted the company's much publicized commitment to the highest standard ethical standards against to relentless pursuit of growth.

Under fire from labor critics, worried about price hawks and facing a sagging stock price, Wal-Mart's leaders recognized that the allegations could have devastating consequences. Documents and interviews show. Wal-Mart de Mexico was the company's brightest success story, pitched to investors as a model for future growth. (Today, one in five Wal-Mart stores is in Mexico.) Confronted with evidence of corruption in Mexico, top Wal-Mart executives refused more no damage control than on creating cost savings.

At one meeting where the bribery case was discussed, H. Lee Scott Jr., then Wal-Mart's chief executive, rebuked internal investigators for being overly aggressive. Days later, records show, Wal-Mart's top lawyer arranged to ship the internal investigators' files on the case to Mexico City. The many responsibility for the investigation was then given to the general counsel of Wal-Mart de Mexico—a remarkable choice since the same general counsel was alleged to have authorized bribes.

The general counsel promptly concentrated his fellow Wal-Mart de Mexico executives.

When Wal-Mart's director of corporate investigations—a former top FBI official—read the general counsel's report, his appraisal was scathing. "Truly lacking," he wrote in an e-mail in his boss.

The report was nonetheless accepted by Wal-Mart's leaders as the last word on the matter.

In December, after learning of The Times' reporting in Mexico, Wal-Mart informed the Justice Department that it had begun an internal investigation into possible violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, a federal law that makes it a crime for American corporations and their subsidiaries to bribe foreign officials. Wal-Mart said the company had learned of possible problems with how it obtained permits, but stressed that the issues were limited to "discrete" cases. New York Times News Service

WORLD BRIEFS

France begins vote; economy may doom Sarkozy

PARIS—France voted on Sunday in round one of a presidential ballot with a feeble economy that could make Nicolas Sarkozy the country's first president in twice a fight for reelection in more than 30 years. In a contest driven as much by a dislike of Sarkozy's showy style and his failure to bring down unemployment as by policy differences, Sarkozy and his Socialist rival Francois Hollande are pegged in lead might either candidate to go the rough to a May 6 runoff, where polls give Hollande a double-digit lead. Hollande, 57, promises less drastic spending cuts while Sarkozy says he needs higher taxes on the wealthy to fund state-aided job creation, in particular a 75 percent upper tax rate on income above 1 million euros ($1.33 million). He would become France's first left-wing president since Francois Mitterrand, who beat incumbent Valery Giscard d'Estaing in 1981. Sarkozy, also 57, says he is a safer pair of hands for future economic he told but many of the workers and young voters drawn to his 2007 pledge of more pay for more work are deserting him as jobless claims have hit their highest level in 13 years. *Reuters*

UN Council authorizes up to 300 Syria monitors

BEIRUT—The UN Security Council unanimously adopted a Russia-European drafted resolution on Saturday that authorizes an initial deployment of up to 300 unarmed military observers to Syria for three months to help bolster a fragile week-old ceasefire. But the 15-nation council's move to condition deployment on observers on a UN assessment of compliance with the truce refracted US and European fears that the Syrian government viewed Ukiliard to stop shelling towns, retreat troops to barracks and withdraw heavy weapons from cities makes the prospects for success slim. *Reuters*

US nun group rejects Vatican condemnation

WASHINGTON—The leader of a group of US Catholic nuns on Saturday rejected condemnation from a Vatican report that said it defied Church teachings and urged members to stop "caring for the least among us on the margins of society." Network was singled out for supporting women's health rights in a Vatican report this week condemning the main US association of Catholic nuns, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). The three-year inquiry by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which oversees Roman Catholic doctrine, criticized the LCWR for taking liberal stances on contraception, homosexuality and female priests. *AFP*

Fits to race while rage boils on Bahrain streets

MANAMA—Formula One drivers will race in Bahrain on Sunday while rage boils on the streets outside, among protesters who denounce the Grand Prix as a gaudy spectacle by a ruling family that crushed Arab Spring democratization, last year. Demonstrators hurling petrol bombs have clashed nightly with police during the past week, and security forces responded with tear gas, rubber bullets and birdshot. Black smoke from burning tires wafted over Budaiya on Sunday morning, before the final race. Sundays, outside the capital of Manama, was the scene of many protests on Friday. The death of 38-year-old protester Salah Abbas Habib—found sprawled on a rooftop on Saturday after overnight clashes—provides more fuel for outrage among a Shi'ite Muslim majority that complains of being marginalized by ruling Sunnis. *Reuters*

US: China sold missile parts to North Korea

WASHINGTON—The United States believes a Chinese firm sold North Korean components for a missile transporter-elevator-erector of a kind used to launch rockets, a US official said on Friday.

The Obama administration suspects the Chinese manufacturer sold the chassis—not the entire vehicle—and may have believed it was for civilian purposes, which denies it would not be an international violation of UN sanctions, the senior official said.

But such a sale—coming to light amid tensions over a failed North Korean rocket launch—is like this month—raises concerns in Washington about whether China is making enough of an effort to abide by the prohibitions on weapons sales to Pyongyang.

The New York Times first reported the administration suspected the Chinese manufacturer involved in the transaction was Hubei Sanjiang. *Reuters*

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Quintas for Tab; Westwood triumphs

JAKARTA—Filipino star Angelo Quintas is heading three-on-one on the 10th hole in a playoff to claim his maiden win on the Asian Tour after defeating Indonesian Muchtars Rizal and Rahmat Arora at the Royale Jakarta Golf Club on Sunday.

Breaking 72 for the third time in four days, Quintas (278 overall) sank a birdie putt from 10 feet to edge Rizal (69) and Arora (70) who both finished at 279.

Another Filipino, Antonio Lascuña, rebounded with a 71 and secured 18th place at 283.

Westwood, who won $131,000 and a satin jacket, beat Thai Thanom Khositthirat (67) by two shots. —Asian Tour News

Editor Teddyboy S. Molavedra
Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

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■ Bulls, Sixers thwart rivals/A31

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Texters slight faves as title series begins

By Mueng S. Castillo

DEFENDING champion Talk 'N Text, the logical favorite, and B-Meg, the popular choice, clash their best-of-seven duel for the PBA Commissioner's Cup today with both sides aiming to set the tone for the series at Smart Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

Tip-off is 6:45 p.m. with the Tropang Texters installed as the slight picks by virtue of a super loaded lineup that has gotten them the league's last five championship seats.

Talk 'N Text won in the only time it met B-Meg that counts, and the title series is a first against each other for both franchises.

The Texters believe they have to squeeze the Tropang Texters if the Llamados can slow down their fans and make the game as deliberate as possible, the way Barako Bull did to the Phoenix Fuel Masters last week.

But before that, Coach Chot Reyes is trying to make it look like his Texters are already jigged out at this point to the playoffs.

Coach, though, is not listing, he believes that the Texters are as hungry as ever.

Talk 'N Text is trying to put itself in the same position it was in last year, when it won the first two games before being upset in the Governors' Cup by Petron Blaze and falling one title short of the league's fifth Grand Slam.

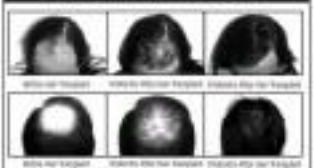
The Texters would like nothing else than to get that chance again, especially after Reyes had announced that this would be his last season in the PBA. He was unwisely named head coach of the national basketball program.

Reyes concedes that B-Meg has the advantage on the air inasmuch as reinforced Rey Rey Guinto-Mallonga's lanzon that they have the edge in speed, and it would be very interesting to see how he can make his team run as Gilas does everything to slow the game down.

Prolific B-Meg import Denzel Bowles, a three-to-five first-round steward, is expected to give Talk 'N Text counterpart Donnell Harvey a difficult time.

After seeing the dazzling of Ti Meg gunslinger Jayson Castro and Barako Bull setter, Reyes is expected to throw several men in crusade the two-time former MVP

PERMANENT AND NATURAL HAIR



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Batangas Bulls bomb Manila Sharks

TAGAYE'S Anyaso Sibabe slides safely home for the winning run as Cebu catcher Ben Cisco dives awake the throw from second base. The Pioneers won, 3-1.

By Marc Anthony Reyes

BATANGAS explored the absence of several key men in the enemy's lineup to stun downthe-wire defending champion Manila, 11-4, yesterday in Baseball Philippines' Series 9 at the Clark Field in Pampanga.

The Bulls pelted the Sharks' pitching rotation with 13 hits to gain a share of the lead alone with Alabang and Batangas Boardwalk in nearby fields for identical 2-1 slates.

Batangas notched its first victory after a skinned 1-6-1 thumping of Alabang, while tries 2 and 5 champion Cebu were down, 4-5, to Taguig after blowing a 4-3 lead at the top of the ninth inning.

Batangas scored heavily in the first and third frames to take command early as it landed very capable of redeeming the disappointing pool exhibit the complete it a loaded program consisting of the 8 rails of men's and women's 200m freestyle, 100m breaststroke, 200m butterfly, 100m backstroke, 400m individual medley, 50m freestyle, 4x50m medley relay and 4x100m freestyle relay.

University of San Carlos mermaid Lorenzlie Bilbasso will aim to surpass the glittering haul of seven gold and one silver medals of De La Salle-Dasmariñas swimmer Aurice Daday in last year's meet held in Dumaguete.

Action in men's baseball, men's and women's basketball, men's and women's beach volleyball, men's football, men's sepak takraw, women's softball, men's and women's volleyball, men's and women's badminton, men's boxing, men's and women's chess, men's and women's karate, women's and women's table tennis and men's and women's taekwondo also start today.

"Cebu is 99.99 percent ready to host the Palaro National Collegiate Games," said league president and commissioner Prof. Antonio Go, who is the vice president for finance of the Holy Spirit University in Bohol, who thanked Cebu City Mayor Michael Rama and Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia for their all-out support.

Ushering in the festivities yesterday was the formal inauguration of the track oval held by Up, Prince national skater Jo Simmons of Angeles, Baron and Garcia, who organized the colorful opening ceremonies where about 3,000 athletes and officials took part.

SMB destroys Thailand five

Grabs ABL lead with 14th win

By Jane Manaore

SAN MIGUEL Beer, despite not playing at full strength, still proved too tough for Chong Thailand to handle.

Czech Bobby Parks had the luxury of dueling all 12 of his players as the Beermen ripped the Slammers, 105-79, yesterday for the solo lead in the Asean Basketball League.

Nih Fandom led five Beermen in doubling figures with 22 points on top of seven rebounds and five assists as they toppled the defending champion Slammers at the Thai-Japanese Indoor Gym in Bangkok.

With their fourth straight victory in a 14-4 card, the Beermen are now half a game ahead of the in-form Philippine Patriots (13-4), who took a 25-point beating at the hands of the Indonesia Warriors while playing with just one import on Saturday.

Chong Thailand dropped a fourth straight game, stayed in the cellar with a 5-13 record, and practically bowed out of the playoffs.

The Beermen are forced to bear their last three elimination-round foes—the Singapore Slingers, the Bangkok Cobras and the Saigon Heat—and draw the lightest possible assignments in the playoffs.

Leo Avenido sparked San Miguel's breakaway after the halftime break, coming a 3-point Beermen lead to a 64-44 bubble on Roger Yap's three-pointer.

Import Christopher Lamont and Calvin Williams notched the fight for the Slammers, who came as close than 17 points.

Chris Banchero and Avenido had 13 points each, 10-do Cruz added 11 and Benedict Hernandez had 10 for the Beermen, who swept their three-game, head-to-head duel with the Patriots in the eliminations.

After Hernandez drilled in a three-pointer for an 89-57 lead early in the fourth, Parks teamed wrestling his men to the bench.

Through the Beermen were beaten off the boards, 22-30, they wrested the ball twice and had a 29-12 advantage in assists.

The Slammers actually had a great start, jumping out to an early 11-point lead.

But Banchero and Avenido combined in a dazzling 16-4 run spanning three minutes late in the period with Cruz capping the attack with a three-point play that tied it at 20.

Prisaa fires off: 24 golds staked

ODBU CITY—Twenty-four gold medals will be up for grabs in swimming and athletics as the 2012 Philippine Schools Athletic Association (Prisaa) National Collegiate Games finally gets off the ground today at the Cebu City Sports Center and nearby venues.

Eight championships in track and field and 16 in the pool latch off the country's longest-running sports showcase for outstanding collegiate athletes as the Games marks its 2006 edition since being revived in 1991.

As usual, the virtually renowned track oval set the golds in the men's and women's 1,500-meter runs, men's 110m hurdles, women's 100m hurdles, men's and women's shot put and men's and women's long jump.

As the adjacent Olympic-size swimming pool exhibit the complete it a loaded program consisting of the 8 rails of men's and women's 200m freestyle, 100m breaststroke, 200m butterfly, 100m backstroke, 400m individual medley, 50m freestyle, 4x50m medley relay and 4x100m freestyle relay.

University of San Carlos mermaid Lorenzlie Bilbasso will aim to surpass the glittering haul of seven gold and one silver medals of De La Salle-Dasmariñas swimmer Aurice Daday in last year's meet held in Dumaguete.

Action in men's baseball, men's and women's basketball, men's and women's beach volleyball, men's football, men's sepak takraw, women's softball, men's and women's volleyball, men's and women's badminton, men's boxing, men's and women's chess, men's and women's karate, women's and women's table tennis and men's and women's taekwondo also start today.

"Cebu is 99.99 percent ready to host the Palaro National Collegiate Games," said league president and commissioner Prof. Antonio Go, who is the vice president for finance of the Holy Spirit University in Bohol, who thanked Cebu City Mayor Michael Rama and Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia for their all-out support.

Ushering in the festivities yesterday was the formal inauguration of the track oval held by Up, Prince national skater Jo Simmons of Angeles, Baron and Garcia, who organized the colorful opening ceremonies where about 3,000 athletes and officials took part.

IN THE BIG LEAGUES NOW

Members of the Philippine rugby team proudly show their trophy after the Volcanoes ripped tournament favorite Sri Lanka, 18–8, in the Rizal Memorial Stadium and earned promotion to the elite HSBC Asian 5 Nations tournament later this year. The Philippines started out as the lowest ranked team in the pre-tournament survey but rejected the form charts with earlier victories over Singapore, 33-10, and Chinese Taipei, 34-12.

Torres, Peñalosa top Mango Triathlon

MONICA Torres and Franklin Peñalosa ruled their respective divisions in the 1st Mango Man Triathlon in Guimaras recently.

Torres, the Philippine Sports Commission's triathlon awardee last year, stood 2 hours, 49 minutes and 7 seconds to top the women's race of the Olympic-assisted triathlon (1.5-kilometer swim, 40K bike and 10K run), which was staged along with the 2nd Manggahan Fun Run in part of the province's 39th Manggahan Festival 2012.

Asian Games bronze medalist Peñalosa ruled duathlon event in 2:39:04, with 1st Lt. Joseph Bilo (1:42:20) and Ferdinand Ednave (2:39:06).

The team of Thongsa Mabuay-on, Ronnie Bellosa, and Ned Jr. Sana topped the triathlon relay.

Close to 1,000 racers answered the starting gun fired by Guimaras Gov. Felipe Nava.

Jesse Agravante won the men's 10K race in 34:42 with Josephus Nicholas riding the downhill slide in 34:02. Ryan Hellera and Maryflame Vergara bagged the men's and women's 5K crown, respectively, in 16:13 and 22:05.

The Manggahan Festival, which was first held on May 22, 1903 to commemorate the first anniversary of Guimaras as a full-fledged province, will be capped on May 22 by the Tribes Competition among seven barangay groups.

The festival is an annual project of the Guimaras government and the Guimaras Manggahan Foundation headed by Henry Batilaro.

JUNGOLFER SHINES

Filipino jungolfer Jordan Magsino receives a plaque from an Indonesian official after his first runner-up finish in Class D of the recent 1st Tree Visions Tournament at the Bayong Green Valley golf course in Purwaya, Thailand. The 13-year-old Magsino also qualified to play in the Junior World Championships in San Diego, California, in July.

SPORTSWATCH

24 cockers stay perfect in 'Sagupan'

THE PERFECT RUNNING with perfect five wins or four matches remained in 24 and went alike a series of elimination rounds in the 1st Sagupaan National Derby Derby of Pasay City Cockpit. The 24 made it in the quarter finals on May 1 where a guaranteed prize of P15.1 million is at stake.

Derby organizers Lito Atienza and Rudy Cruz said the number of qualifiers will go up after today's new elimination round at PCC.

The lone male semifinals kick off on April 30. Participants with 2-0, 2-1, 3-0, 3-1 and 4-0 points will compete for their final round on May 1.

'Bulang-Bulang' goes to Pasig, Bacolor today

CROWD-DRAWING battles in the NPC00 Bulang Bulang Derby series resume today at Pasig Square Garden and Bacolor Cockpit in Pampanga.

Breeders affiliated with the National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders Against the Rights in Pasig. As a product of support, the match's Rizal Gamefowl Breeders Association (RGBA) and Bacolor Cockpit. The Bulang Bulang will have two more national eliminations at PSG on April 28 and 30.

Even at Bacolor Cockpit, the spotlight will fall on the showdown among members of the Kapampangan Gamefowl Breeders Association (KGBA).

FCBL: Hope Christian, NU cagers down rivals

HOPE Christian High School opened its title-retention bid on a high note by downing University of Santo Tomas, 61-37, while National University outlasted its mummy-size nemesis at the start of the FCBL Foreign Cup Saturday at Ben Hur Gym in Quezon City.

With Jolex Aparilla and Clint Dolipers scoring almost at will, Hope Christian got off to a winning start, posting a 22-19 halftime lead which it protected the rest of the way.

Aparilla and Dolipers finished with 15 and 13 points, respectively, as Hope Christian underscored its readiness to relinquish its crown in the event presented by Foreground sponsored by Smart.

Nobody scored in double figures for the Tiki Challenges, but the reigning UPeM champions still pulled off a 75-59 win over the Tigers in the featured match of the four-game bill.

Ralph Arangco and Ralph Rosa had eight points each while four other NU players posted seven points to highlight the team's well-balanced attack.

In other games, Roger Dimayuga dished out 19 points to lift the Bu Eaters (3 Baby Tamaraws (1-3-1) 75-61 overtime win over UE, while Migsia surprised Adamson, 46-41.

Don't curse the dark, change boxing's lightbulb

SACRAMENTO, California—Question: How many Filipino boxing buffs does it take to screw in a light bulb?

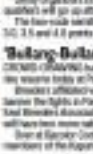
Answer: One to install the new bulb and 11 guys more to figure out what to do with the old one till the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016.

Since coming home empty-handed from the third 2011 Olympics meets hosting qualifiers in Astana, Kazakhstan last week, the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (ABAP) has to duck for more flowers as Dark Day sang in the movie musical Calamity Jane—are flying "bricks that you can't see clearly."

The new and improved slap, with rest of dough thrown in gratuitous, to add applause the silver bullet to turn our talent into high Olympic hopefuls. Members of training and overseas expenses the lot boxers have yielded dubious odds.

Mark Anthony Barriga, a qualifier via a technical quirk at that—is likely to be our only boxing entry to the London Games in July. He was by lieutenant campaigns—like Harry Tañamor's in Beijing four years ago—it is not a bunge from previous Olympics when boxing was a sports you knew for the casinos.

Same-shop blades take time to forge. There is a gestation period, between the idea seven years to bring a boxer to Olympic stature. But the slap was delayed by the fact that the fighters' Olympic quest could be knocked, one cog fellow columnist and boxing writer.



SOUTHPAW

Percy D. Della

Ironic? Instead.

Former Gov. Manny Pilot, a long-time champion of gamecock development, is befuddled by the boxing brass who rejected the chickens he had given away some years ago.

With the stars of Thailand-grown Manny V. Pangilinan and Team Commissioner Jose Romero boxing, the gym is a shut with friends, and the marketing and the "pocket" releases come first. Meanwhile, the "producer"—the boxers themselves—were inadequate to do justice to the promotions.

A mini mistake, says Pilot, is design failure to mount "organized" and usually promotion, organized or even national. Boxing seems to be aimed at discovering new talents rather than developing available bosses in the pool.

"The careers, Ating leadership has been devoted the few only a little more than years," executive director Ed Picazo told me by e-mail. "That's to expect, it is a lot. And we had to sell some of the bosses in the past, having to with a penny

Andrew Smith."

Continuing Pilot's views, Picazo pointed to the progress of the new Abap Technical-assistant discovering, hosting and rewarding boxing talents.

"Feed the grassroots development program is alive and vibrant," he said. "We brought out regional (area) tournaments all over the country: Davao, Panabo, Bacolod, Mandaue, Tagaloan, Cagayan de Oro, Zamboanga, Mindoro, Quezon City, etc. in search of the promising raw talents and we have discovered quite a few."

Abap's efforts do not end there. All boxers that there are talents who cannot come to the tournaments. "That is why we are sending our trainers to the provinces to look for these diamonds in the rough, here and there."

And their dream is the "partition of profession al ranking."

"The best of the pro ranks... is a real one," Picazo says. "We had our marketing prospect last year we brought in a couple of ex tour nominations abroad, acquired himself quite well but jumped slug [pun not meant] rank-ever is possible."

Concludes Picazo, "We are also continuing our program of bringing in foreign matches as consultants for transfer of technology, upgrade and evaluation of our national coaches...

"Abap had in the share of success with what it had to work with and we're proud of that. Here at the cliche' goes, you've only as good as your last win."

Tams, Tigers aim for 1st victories in Filoil Cup

By Cedell P. Tupas

FEU Tamaraws vs Hanes Premier Preseason Cup

The Tamaraws, strong by a heavy defeat to National U, go up against Lyceum at 3:30 p.m. after the Tigers sought catch the Perpetual Help Altas in the Filoil Flying V Arena in San Juan.

Mapua makes its tournament debut at 5:15 p.m. against a University of the East team looking to bounce back from a loss to Letran last Friday in the tournament presented by Super Industrial and Hanes & Plein.

The Cardinals will parade a formidable roster led by high-scoring sweepstakes Jason Ballesteros and big men Mark Bringas and Mike Dezula. The Warriors hope to bring to the win ratio a squad led by veterans Lord Casimiro and Ben Sumang, who led UE with 13 points in the loss against Letran last Friday.

Both the Tamaraws and the Pirates are coming off losses, NU to rebels Bradford second to Ateneo in the last two years in the UAAP remains favored with its powerful roster.

Former UAAP Most Valuable Player Bill Lanete hopes to bounce back from a poor performance against the Bulldogs, where he was held to just 3-of-14 shooting. The Tamaraws are looking to draw better performances from Terrence Romeo and Mike Tuberosa.

The Tigers lost in last Bida in their tournament debut. Although Perpetual Help is considered a light weight in the NCAA, the Altas came out with plenty of fight before dropping a 69-62 decision in Biñan last Wednesday.

Also featured are Mel Mold and Nigerian hanger Femi Babayemi are expected to lead the Altas, whose fourth-quarter uprising fell short against the Eagles.

CHICAGO'S Kirk Korver shoots between Dallas' Dominique Jones (20) and Vince Carter.

Bulls, Sixers thwart rivals

Chicago pads Eastern lead

CHICAGO—The Chicago Bulls held off a fourth-quarter rally to beat the Dallas Mavericks, 93-83, on Friday and extend their lead atop the NBA Eastern Conference to 3½ games.

Luol Deng scored 22 point and Richard Hamilton added 19 for the Bulls, who have two games left in the regular season—against Indiana and hardly Cleveland—and reserve every Miami last three.

Defending NBA champion Dallas, which has already secured a playoff berth, avoided season points loses Kidd and Jason Terry.

Erik Dampier scored 17 points to lead the Mavericks.

In Indianapolis, Philadelphia edged closer to clinching a playoff spot by beating Indiana, 109-106, in overtime, ending the Pacers' seven-game winning streak.

Elton Brand scored 20 points and Lou Williams added 19 for the 76ers, who need win only one of their remaining three games to have Milwaukee lose one in order to clinch a playoff berth.

Brand's rebound had a season-high 22 points and grabbed 13 rebounds for Indiana, which missed a chance to lock up the No. 3 seed in the Eastern Conference.

In Salt Lake City, Utah fended up to hold on the last playoff spot in the Western Conference by beating Orlando, 117-107, in overtime.

The Jazz moved a game ahead of Phoenix for the eighth and final spot, but the two teams meet on Sunday and the Suns hold the advantage in the tiebreaker.

Devin Harris scored 21 points and had a key block that forced overtime, with the Jazz having recovered from a 14-point deficit in the final half.

The Magic dropped their first game since All-Star center Dwight Howard's back surgery which will keep him out for the season.

Jameer Nelson led Orlando with 23 points, including three 3-pointers.

In Phoenix, Denver clinched a playoff berth by defeating Phoenix, 120-115. Lawson went 3-of-5 on 3-pointers and had 19 points and 10 assists for the Nuggets. AP

Mini-scores: Bobcats 110, Pistons 92 Philadelphia 109, Indiana 106 (OT) Washington 98, Miami 89 Chicago 93, Dallas 83 Portland 92, Orlando 87 Minnesota 103, Golden State 86 Milwaukee 98, New Jersey 83.

Djokovic seeks 8th win vs Nadal

MONTECARLO—Seven-time defending champion Rafael Nadal will try to break top-ranked Novak Djokovic for the first time in eight finals when they meet in the Monte Carlo Masters on Sunday.

Nadal advanced to the final with a four-dropping a set when he beat Gilles Simon 6-3, 6-4 in his semifinal on Saturday. Djokovic earlier rallied from a set down to beat Tomas Berdych 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 and reach his second final at Monte Carlo.

"He's the best ever in history of the sport on this surface. It's an extreme challenge," Djokovic said. "I cannot have ups and downs. I can not afford that against Rafa. But who not believe that I can win."

Djokovic has beaten the Spaniard in seven consecutive finals, including this year's Australian Open, and handed Nadal his only two defeats on clay last year.

"I have everything to win. There's one only positive thing about losing seven times," Nadal said. "The next match-up, you only have to win."

Nadal had not played for three weeks prior to this tournament after he needed to rest and have treatment on his troublesome left knee.

With the Monte Carlo event among the closest on the clay circuit, the conditions suit Nadal. However, he thinks the last few is still working his way back to full fitness, added to Djokovic's recent record against him, means the Serb is the favorite.

NADAL

Overall, Nadal leads their head-to-heads 18-16 but has not won since a group-stage match at the 2011 ATP Finals in London. However, Nadal has not lost in Monte Carlo since 2003—he was injured the following year—and has won 41 straight matches here.

Dottie ready for Sirikit title defense

DOTTIE Ardina left for Singapore yesterday confident of her chances when the open defense of her Queen Sirikit Cup on Saturday against first very here of the Asia-Pacific.

With three victories this year, including the Philippine Amateur (Grand) championship, Ardina has her 4-Game going when seven stars at the Manila Southern Country Club.

"I am prepared. My game is positive and I am playing well," said Ardina.

The pint-sized 19-year-old wonder won the title in India last year becoming the first Filipino to do so in 33 editions of the tournament. And together with Chitlen Bada and Jayde Agojo, the Philippines barely missed a triple double by settling for second in team play.

Agojo is also in Singapore and Lovelyn Quiogue has taken over Bada's spot as the Philippines remains one of the favorites in team play against 12 other countries.

"I am confident but I hope to get the breaks and keep my putts falling since (its) (putting) will be the key," said Ardina.

Backtracking will also be a big factor, according to PCSO team coach Bong Lopez, saying that Talisay Manila is different from the Iloilo Golf Club course where Ardina shot a 5-under 211 to win by one last year.

ARDINA

PHILIPPINE team chief of mission Manny Lopez (left) shakes hands with Brunei Ambassador Sagunan Lilis after the launch of the 100-day countdown to the London Olympics ceremony in the speech, Lopez said Filipinos are looking forward to the Games that will open on July 27 and end on Aug. 12.

NCAA, AKTV ink deal

THE National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) ushers in its 88th season with a new broadcast partner in TV5 after the two parties sealed a three-year agreement giving the network the exclusive right to air all of the league's upcoming events... including the centerpiece basketball... over free channel AKTV and cable sports network Hyper.

Executives of TV5 led by president and CEO Ray Espinosa and executive vice president and COO Bobby Barretto attended the contract signing Saturday, together with NCAA policy board president Fr. Tarcisius Lana, O.P., at the TV family, St. Thomas Bldg. of Letran College, this year's host school.

Espinosa did not disclose the amount involved in the three-year package, but nonetheless referred to the deal as "fair and reasonable."

"We'll never keep the amount to ourselves," said Espinosa, drawing laughter from the audience that included members of the NCAA officials. "It's not as costly as we thought...it's reasonable and fair for us."

Barretto said TV5 will redirect the coverage of the country's oldest collegiate league the way it did with the PBA and United football League.

The deal will see the NCAA holding games during weekends, specifically Saturdays, the same schedule of rival league UAAP.

FED LEAGUE

It's Highlands vs Southwoods

DEFENDING Highlands and Manila Southwoods forged a championship duel after beating their respective semifinal opponents in contrasting fashion recently in the 2012 Ladies Federation League.

Highlands swept Valley at home and clinched the best point awarded in the away format the next day to advance to the finals while Southwoods doubled reigning titlist Alabang in their own home-and-away semifinal duel that went to a sudden-death playoff.

Facing a 1-0 deficit going to their home game, world jetgolf champ Miss Lagunpi sparked a 3-1 comeback by Southwoods to force the extension. Miss Imsamngo and Claire Ong then earned back the pair of Joan Morales and Gil Mendoza on the second playoff hole to bid Alabang's bid for a third straight win.

Morales and Mendoza won their fourball matches in regulation play only to drop the next tiebreaker match to Valley.

Lagunpi teamed up with Liza Jimenez for a T&S win in high-low, Sandy Vallegera/Christine Simbre took a 3-2 decision in greensome while Ong and Samsingko crowned their aggregate rivals (T&S) for the 3-1 win that swayed the balance for Southwoods.

Highlands' Lizza Fernandez of Valley proved too hard to match for Valley.

Sandy Romualdez/Norma Lee (greensomes), Jhanne Whaley/Riva Galvez Tan (high-low), Sarah Imperial/Glen Sison (T&S) and Gia Bona/Mini Romualdez (aggregate) also trounced their matches under 10 holes.

The finals is set Thursday and Friday.

Riviera Invt'l tees off Wednesday

THE 14th SEVERA International tees off Wednesday through Saturday here at the Riviera Golf Club.

The 36-hole stroke-play tournament is a two-player team competition. Two shotgun tee-offs are scheduled each day at 6:30 in the morning and at noon.

The event's first day will be played at the Couples course via a net-aggregate format, and the second day in the Lagoon Course using the one-ball, foursome system.

Trophies await the winners in the men's, ladies', mixed and sponsor's divisions.

All per 3's will have hole-in-one prizes (one golf carts, Hyundai Niro, Sedans, Chevrolet and Callaway golf sets. Major prizes include 32" LCD TV, valuable gadgets, and international and domestic airline tickets.

Major sponsors of this year's edition are: J Yao (Callaway), Inc., SEVERE, Harbour Centre, Ringoff, Mang Inasal, Hyundai Automotives, Cardio, Mikasa Restaurants Café Inc., Bert Photo Manufacturing, The Fort Company, Philippine Airlines, Rogeng & Associates Securities Inc., International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI), Daniel Boone, Dusy Free Philippines, Datsa Corp. and San Miguel Corp.

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Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

Bank rates drop but BSP wants deeper cuts

With key interests set low, banking sector urged to follow suit

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By Michelle V. Rosca

BANK LENDING rates may have dropped by an average of 35.5 basis points since the start of the year, but the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas still wants the banking sector to offer even cheaper loans.

Because the BSP has cut its key policy rates by a total of 50 basis points this year, monetary authorities expect bank lending rates to be reduced by an amount equivalent to that of the government so that the desired impact on the economy will be achieved.

The BSP's monetary policy is meant to influence commercial interest rates being charged to borrowers.

"Currently, there is a 75-percent pass-through of the rate cuts done by the BSP," BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said, adding that banks are expected to fully absorb the cut in key rates.

The cuts of the BSP to reduce its monetary policy in January and in March were meant to boost demand for bank loans which, in turn, could spur consumption and investments.

Monetary officials said bank lending, which grew by a robust pace last year, should rise further to accelerate growth of the economy.

The economy smarted in terms of gross domestic product, gone by 3.7 percent last year, slowing down from the 7.6 percent pace registered in 2010. Weak export earnings due to declining demand from crisis-stricken economies in Europe contributed much to the slowdown.

With bank lending expected to grow further, domestic spending may increase and offset the ill effects of sluggish exports on the economy, officials said.

Latest lending data from the BSP showed that outstanding loans of universal and commercial banks grew by 18 percent or P2.76 trillion as of end-February from the P2.34 trillion acquired in the same period last year.

According to the BSP, banks need to sustain robust growth in

BANK, B2

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
April 20, 2012
42.605

STOCK MARKET
April 20, 2012
16.82

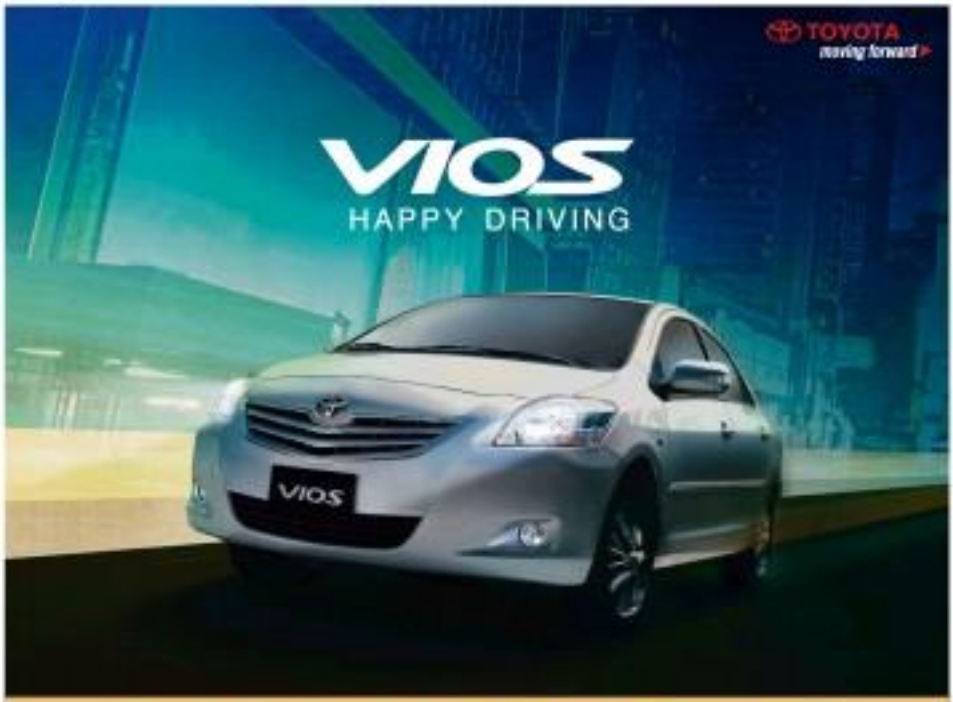
Stocks seen to eke out gains this week

STOCKS ARE expected to trade with some upward bias this week as many investors remain awash in cash and are eager to take fresh position in equities.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index last week gained 1.2 percent to 5,192.48, hitting a new intra-day high of 5,219.

"I think there's a lot more room for the market to go up because many investors have cashed in during the listing of GT Capital Holdings," said Joseph Rosas, president of Ex-

STOCKS, B5



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Not fair? Not a problem

WHILE Petron Corp.'s acquisition of a 49.5 percent stake in Malaysia Berhad was met with admiration (and, let's admit it, a bit of envy) locally, a small group of people on Malaysia are apparently not too happy about it.

Specifically, some minority shareholders of the Malaysia's third largest petroleum refiner and distributor think they should be getting more than the 3.59 ringgit per share Petron has put on the table for the mandatory offer for the remaining 51 percent it does not own.

A small segment of the Malaysian media has also raised its worries against the offer price, saying it was too low (of course, this was the price at which Petron bought its stake in the first from energy giant Talisay Mobil).

Last week, Kenanga Investment Bank—the financial adviser of Esso's minority shareholders—advised against accepting the offer, saying the offer price was "not fair" and that the shares should be worth more.

Is Petron bothered? Apparently not.

Its 65 percent stake in the firm ensures it has enough to control a veto on board decisions by minority shareholders (who are fragmented anyway).

If minority shareholders do reject the tender offer, it also means Petron will still end up spending less.

Most importantly, Kenanga told minority shareholders to hold on to their Esso shares because they would "stand to benefit from the potential future growth of the company under the new management and ownership."

Sounds like it's a good problem to have. —Erik Ian C. Cayon

Reluctant billionaire

SOME people will do anything to be tagged as one of the wealthiest people on the planet, but not Roberto V. Ongpin o.k.a. RVO, who protested his inclusion in Forbes Magazine's 2012 listing of the world's billionaires.

RVO was one of the six Filipinos (spouse from the Philippines who made it to the latest global list, joining the likes of Henry Sy Sr., Lucio Tan, Andrew Tan, Enrique Razon Jr. and Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

Forbes estimated that the 75-year-old RVO, a former trade minister under the Marcos regime, had a net worth of $1 billion. RVO has interests in property, gaming, mining and oil exploration, banking and is also part of Top Frontier, the entity with a controlling interest in 8-versailles' conglomerate Tan Mingas Corp.

"I think they were right but they are simply wrong," RVO, a certified public accountant and Harvard Business School graduate, told Biz Buzz on Friday at the conference of the annual stockholders' meeting of Alphaland Corp.

RVO said Forbes' formula of counting only the interest in publicly listed companies (based on market price) didn't accurately quantify a person's net worth. "Why isn't it? It's because the liabilities are not factored in, he said. RVO that thinks it's preposterous for him to be on this list while the likes of Manny Pangilinan and Susan Ang —controlled Philippine Seven Holdings Corp.—are absent from it.

For his part, Forbes Magazine (which started counting billionaires around the world 25 years ago) has used the same formula for years and has no publicly available measure for quantifying liabilities.

"I threatened to sue them. I said, I'm a very poor man," RVO added. "They said, go ahead sue us, as I didn't bother." —Boris C. Dumlao

Back to politics

"THE FUTURE governor of Negros Oriental" was how RVO described Margarita "Gary" Teves when he was introduced to investors of Alphaland Corp. and South Big Media during the annual stockholders' meeting on Friday.

Teves—a former finance secretary and president of Land Bank of the Philippines—sits on the board of these RVO-led companies as an independent director.

"Yes, I'll intend to do so," Teves confirmed to Biz Buzz, when asked whether he indeed would run for governor of his province during the elections next year.

Teves, whose family hails from Dumaguete City, is an economist and isn't a newbie to politics, having represented the 3rd District of Negros Oriental for 11 years starting 1987. (Rep. Jacinto Paras represents the province in reform banking and finance, oversaw foreign investment and "build competitiveness while establishing economic safety nets). He was one of the longest-serving finance secretaries, one who persistently pushed for the implementation of VAT reforms to stabilize the government's then deteriorating finances even when it was politically inconvenient during the Macapagal-Arroyo regime.

Teves said, however, that he would have to work doubly hard to boost his awareness level, especially among the youth. "Those who are 30 to 20 years old probably were only four to seven years old in 1998 when I first aired my views in Congress. They also constitute the largest percentage of our voters," he said. —Doris C. Bumatay

Foreign equity

ZAMBOANGA del Sur—IT perks booming in Baguio City to host coal agreements almost the petition to reverse its 10-5 decision on foreign equity (that economic voting shares, limit the ban in the computation of foreign equity in public utilities), all 15 Supreme Court justices were present in the oral argument that lasted for three hours.

Lawyers representing PLDT, the Office of the Solicitor General, Securities and Exchange Commission and Philippine Stock Exchange were there. Also in attendance were petitioners in intervention: Public Servant and Lauro Constitution, who is now the principal complainant submitting his late father, Wilson Gamboa, who died of a liver ailment in October last year.

According to our source, two of the justices have indicated that they (Teves would) vote for a reversal while the rest have not to dismiss) a change of heart.

"Although this is too early to tell, a reversal in fortune could be forthcoming as the SC holds another public hearing on June 18 in Manila. It foresees two or more public hearings to sway the SC to decide with finality on the Gamboa case," the source said.

For the oral arguments in June, 85-August-Petitioner-S.J. and Dr. Bernardo Villegas, who were members of the committee that drafted the 1987 Constitution, will be invited as amicus curiae to shed light on what had transpired during the formulation of the basic law of the land. —Doris C. Bumatay

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Bank rates drop

From page B1

lending rates they have the capacity to offer more loans given their significant resources.

A record **four bank deposits**, which banks use for lending, have been growing at a healthy pace.

During a meeting of the central bank's monetary Board on Thursday, officials kept the overnight borrowing and lending rates at 4 and 6 percent, respectively—the lowest setting ever.

The BSP said that the current policy rates are considered to be just right—it pushes up demand at levels that will not cause inflation to breach the targeted ceiling set between 2 and 4 percent.

In the first quarter, inflation averaged at 3.1 percent.

Stocks seen to eke out

From page B1

gle Equities Inc.

"But then, First West Bank IPO (initial public offering) is coming up soon so it will siphon off some liquidity. But because it's a smaller issue, not everyone can get allocation so the funds will flow to the market to seek other stocks," Bautista said.

First West Bank has priced its IPO at the low-end of the original price range at P38.50 a share, bringing the base IPO size to P4.34 billion which can be upsized to P5.22 billion if the overallotment option is exercised.

"I think we'll have another run by June," Bunsa said, explaining that the local market would usually ramp up after the ous season in April.

The immediate support level of the index is now at 5,388, which may be tested again this week, he said.

On the upside, the immediate resistance is seen at 5,500.

"Rallies will be generally liquidity driven, as investors anticipate accommodative measures to keep the global recovery moving," said Trejo May Sariñana, an analyst at Investments arm.

This development has been magnified by the increase in turnover and unidentified foreign buying at the local market, Sariñana added.

"For now, most will be on the hunt for fresh issuances that could catapult barometers to 5,500. Inflation as dips gradually and held," she said, adding that immediate support rests at 5,388 while resistance targets at 5,500 to 5,550.

Subdued and positive lines are anticipated in the coming months, beginning with China's surprise move to complement fiscal adjustments to industrial readjustments.

On Friday, the Dow Jones Industrial Index added 65.14 points, or 0.5 percent, to 13,020.58 as the early stream of first quarter US corporate results turned out to be better than market expectations. —Doris C. Bumatay

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By the staff

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More new jobs filled in late 2011

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NUMBER of jobs filled in Metro Manila by top enterprises continued to grow at least at a slower pace, in the fourth quarter of 2011.

The rate of hiring also surpassed the rate of job loss, according to data from the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics (BLES).

In its report, the agency said that for every 1,000 enterprise workers in the National Capital Region, 104 new hires were added, while 93 had quit or had been fired.

Job growth peaked in the sector of real estate, renting and business activities, while job loss was highest in mining and quarrying. The same situation had been recorded in the previous quarter.

The data is part of the BLES survey of 598 large corporations in NCR, which were drawn from the 2010 edition of the Securities and Exchange Commission's list of "Top 25,000 Corporations."

The rate of growth in employment, or labor turnover, settled at a rate of 3.08 percent. This means that 19 new workers had been added for every 1,000. The hiring rate was recorded at 10.38 percent while separation rate stood at 8.5 percent.

Also, the net growth in employment among large firms from October to December 2011 represents a slowdown from the 2.51 percent reported in the preceding quarter. It was slower than the 3.01 percent seen in the same quarter of 2010.

Based on the survey, large enterprises took in more new employees to fill vacated posts—and because the firms were engaged in expanding their businesses.

As for job displacements, people who were laid off outnumbered those who decided to quit, as observed in 5 of the 14 industry sectors covered by the study.

Hiring was most rampant in the sectors of mining and quarrying (17.1 percent of total), construction (7.7 percent), and manufacturing (4.7 percent).

The most number of workers who had quit came from hotels and restaurants (6.7 percent), real estate, renting and business activities (6.5 percent), and private education (6.5 percent).

Other sectors that the study covered include agriculture and forestry; fishing; electricity, gas and water supply; wholesale and retail trade; transport, storage and communications; and health and social work.

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PSALM to bid out fuel contracts for power plants

By Amy R. Remo

STATE POWER Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. is seeking offers for the supply and delivery of oil-based fuel worth P2.49 billion to serve a portion of the requirements of eight power plants that are either owned or managed by the government.

PSALM data showed that the approved budget should already cover 10.2 million liters of industrial fuel oil estimated to be worth P2.21 billion, and 4.26 million liters of industrial diesel oil worth P300.6 million.

According to PSALM, the industrial fuel oil and the bulk of the diesel volume (1.4 million liters) will go to the 600-megawatt Malaya thermal power plant in Rizal.

The rest of the diesel will be used for the 146-MW Naga power station complex in Cebu, for power barges 101, 102, 103 and 104 Southern Philippines Power Corp.'s Bunker C-fired power station in Iligan, and Mirant Mindanao Power Corp.'s diesel-fired generating facility in Zamboanga City.

Bidders will have the option to bid for one, two or all the power plants. Evaluation of bids and award of contract will be undertaken on a per plant basis.

The state agency added that the open competitive bidding would be using a modified-Dutch "pass or fail" criterion as specified in the Government Procurement Reform Act.

PSALM said a pre-bidding conference would be held on April 26, while the bidding proper for the supply and delivery contract has been scheduled on May 10.

PSALM now manages and conducts the bidding processes for fuel procurement, having taken over the function from another state agency, the National Power Corp.

UCPB extends helping hand to coco farmers

By Doris C. Dumlao

UNITED Coconut Planters Bank has embarked on a coconut nursery project to give farmers easy access to good planting materials, allowing them to replace old unproductive coconut trees and expand the size of their plantations.

The bank, through UCPB-CBF Foundation, has teamed up with coconut farmer cooperatives in Quezon, Marbon, Camarines Norte, Iloilo, Agusan Del sur and Surigao Del sur, to establish coconut nurseries in their respective areas. With the assistance of the Philippine Coconut Authority, good sources of seednuts from farmers' farms are harvested already. And, the foundation said in a statement.

UCPB-CBF also reported that 1,000 coconut farmers were able to access around 180,000 good quality coconut seedlings at one instead of paying higher prices from commercial nurseries.

In 2009, the foundation launched "Tatu Kasa Mag Organic Farming Project," training coconut farmers on cost-effective organic or natural farming techniques.

UCPB-CBF foundation also tapped its pool of scholars who were trained on natural or organic farming techniques in Ubit Farmers Training Center in Legazpi City, Iloilo, and Davao Oriental. The scholars held lectures and training for coconut farmers of cooperatives accredited by UCPB-CBF Finance and Development Corp. The participants are expected to apply the skills they have learned to their own vegetable gardens to augment their income.

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Gives A Toast To Winning Combination

It was proven once again that technology and business are the perf
partners to achieve success. The recently concluded event at Sp
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SME Nation's passion for "Winning Combinations".

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Gov't urged to plug tax leaks, study sharing system

Philippine flag carrier

Commodo R. Manuel III

INVESTMENT analysts were reportedly agog over Tan Miguel's buying into the Philippine Airlines and its taking management control, saying it could be the best thing to happen for the country's struggling flag carrier.

There was the published plans of San Miguel to inject $500 million to fresh capital into the airline. The money would not go to the owner of the airline, the Lucio Tan group. It would buy for PAL a new aircraft fleet.

That was all the information we have drawn here. Hardly any other detail was available to the public to serve as basis for the opposite view to the local capital markets. Maybe the analysts knew something.

I am willing to bet my neighbor's house that such optimism is to market relief from the jitters of the San Miguel bunch viewed as the small-scale to the past several years.

The group has long been construed as being the country's biggest (and perhaps most profitable) food- and beverage conglomerate. Starting about five years ago, San Miguel invested in other industries like mining, power distribution and generation, infrastructure and even airport operation.

The group already acquired 24 businesses, investing almost $5 billion since 2007. In fact, its latest financial statement showed that its combined revenue was equivalent to 20 percent of the country's economy, in terms of GDP (gross domestic products).

Those investments turned out to be successful. True, analysts perhaps presumed that the same good fortune would hold out for San Miguel in its PAL venture.

San Miguel president and COO Ramon Ang likewise on RGA as the group's owner to be optimistic about the PAL venture. He was said to have intimated to investment bankers that the group regarded PAL as a real business opportunity. Even so San Miguel, the $500-mil. loss investment in PAL should be a lot of money.

In the jitter and estimation of San Miguel, understandably being kept as top secret in the group, the airline should recover and start to show profit with the new aircraft fleet. After all, no San Miguel venture has ever lost money.

Still, the 57-year old PAL must earn for investors other than profits for serving its PAL. My take is San Miguel took into account that the airline is still the one and only Philippine flag carrier in town—the service, the fleet or even financial performance—is always regarded as a reflection of the Philippines.

Thus, the PAL venture must be another San Miguel strategy to help the country polish its image as a tourism destination, which in my end should be good also for other San Miguel ventures in the tourism sector.

The group has ventured into airport operation, constructing new terminals at the Cebu airport, which is two hours' travel time to the world famous tourism destination here. The domestic terminal has been completed, already packed on the late in the country today.

Two years from now, or enough time for PAL to get stronger as a business, the Catalan airport's international terminal will be completed with the same bright mandarin as the domestic terminal. It will be the first encounter in the Philippines by foreign visitors to arrive, hopefully at least for San Miguel's on board PAL aircraft.

San San Miguel, like PAL ventures being part of a bank strategy. In the tourism industry in which the group intends to go full blast, the airline industry and airport operation go hand-in-hand.

***

Traditionally, the most profitable route of PAL was said to be the one across the Pacific Ocean, meaning to and from the United States and Canada, in which the Philippine government, particularly the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, was still having a serious problem.

From what I gathered, the new aircraft fleet of PAL was intended to serve this same route. The airline at present would not add more flights to the U.S. airports, but according to sources such as New York or Chicago, or even change to airplanes it use for the route.

Four years ago, the US Federal Aviation Administration brought down to Category II its ratings of the Philippines. The rating, given by the FAA to all countries with airlines serving the US routes, has something to do with the government's owners in checking for the safety of airlines in the country. And the Philippine government failed the rating test.

That was four years ago, or two years after the new administration of Gloriaarroyo and another two years under current Benigno Simeon Cojuangco. The Philippine Category II rating by the FAA has not been changed.

True, as a result of the downgrade, PAL could not expand its operations to the US though not halt of the airline. In fact, PAL was the only local airline that obtained a certificate from the International Civil Aviation Organization, or Icao. The certification means PAL complied with the new safety standards that the organization implemented a few years ago. In other words, the IATA rating technically is not a PAL problem to itself, although it may be the problem of other local airlines that may not found to comply with the line mandated by the Philippine government.

From what I gathered, San Miguel intended to help the Aquino/Puno Gil administration to hasten the country's upgrading by IAA back to Category I.

For instance, PAL already invested $2 million in new computer equipment for GMF to retrieve information on a particular airplane of a particular airline....on demand. This was a standard safety system demanded by the FAA.

Also, GMF did not have qualified technical personnel to check on airline safety standards. Now, it has. Only after the new personnel could undertake flowing 777 series, which PAL precisely wanted to acquire for its new fleet.

***

I heard that the able head of GMF Nestor Gutierrez, who is a former Philippine Air Force officer, had a meeting last week in Washington DC with regulators of Icao and the FAA. He said his team from other GMF was efficiently serve to promote their products to those outfits.

Hopefully, he would bring home some good news—something that could be featured as a target date for the Philippines to get back the IAA Category I rating.

That date should close the way for the Philippine government to work on the problem in Europe. There years ago, following the downgrading of the Philippines by the IAA, European countries blacklisted the Philippines, meaning no airline of ours would fly to those countries.

More than the lost opportunity for our airlines, the lost gave us a big black eye in the highly competitive tourism market abroad.

Small-scale miners should be taxed, COMP insists

By Rica T. Dalumpines

THE CHAMBER of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) is challenging the government to first plug major leaks from small-scale miners before seeking higher share of mining revenue from large-scale miners.

"By plugging loopholes, they should collect taxes from small-scale miners," said the group's executive president for communications, Stanley G. Diamandinguen.

About 60 percent of the Philippines' gold production comes from small-scale miners, according to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

Mining—particularly gold mining—would benefit the state more if small-scale miners pay at least the 2 percent excise tax of the gross value of gold they sell to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, according to Diamandinguen.

The industry group said the government lost nearly P1 billion of revenue from gold in 2010 alone due to lack of regulations.

Its also said the industry group was supporting calls for the direct representation of the local governments' share of mining revenue. This way, local governments, civil society groups and other stakeholders can better appropriate how mining contributes to local development.

Presently, companies are required to pay taxes and other fees to the national budget which is distributed to LGUs in the form of revenue allocation of at least four years. This, Diamandinguen said, was why LGUs could not see the value of mining. "Our proposal is to pay directly to the LGU," he said.

COMP also recently reported that the local mining industry lost P35.6 billion worth of foreign direct investments (FDI), which investors placed overseas due to the government's pending mining policy.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources estimates related to new mining applications, which are still pending an executive order on mining. As such, foreign investors opted to place their capital elsewhere instead of putting their money in the banks, COMP said.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas included in mining FDI withdrawals of $246.41 million or P10.4 billion in 2011, which was a reversal of the $262.88 or P12.2 billion inflow in the previous year, COMP said.

Lufthansa signs training deal with Angeles school

ANGELES CITY—The aircraft maintenance subsidiary of Germany's Lufthansa, is reportedly has entered into a training contract with Jocson College Inc. (JCI), a school that offers two-year aircraft maintenance technology and avionics technology courses.

Under the agreement, Lufthansa Technical Training Philippines Inc. (LTTP) will provide theoretical and practical instructions and training to JCI students in accordance with the requirements of the European Aviation Safety Agency starting June this year.

The agreement was signed by Jochen Thewes, LTTP general manager, and Mrs. Helen Jocson, JCI vice president at the Clark Freeport on Friday.

Thewes said his company chose JCI as its training partner after it saw the school's interest to provide its students with high-quality training.

"Lufthansa Technical Training and the Jocson College have the same vision and philosophy. That is why we did not have a hard time in reaching this agreement. We are both willing to provide young people with world-class training for their future tasks," Thewes said.

Thewes said the negotiations for the training agreement was discussed with JCI in February.

Jocson said the school was set to acquire a three-engine Boeing 727 airplane from TransGlobal Airways, a cargo airline based at the Clark International Airport.

Brian Matthew Nepomuceno, JCI legal officer, said minor details, like parking arrangement and documentation, are being ironed out with TransGlobal for the purchase of the aircraft.

Jocson and Nepomuceno said the aircraft, whose purchase amount they declined to disclose, would be used in the training of aircraft maintenance and avionics technology students.

Jose Cruz, director of JCI aviation training department, said each student who would undergo the LTTP training program would have to pay P100,344.50.

He said the training would be incorporated to the curriculum of incoming first year students, while the graduating students will be taught the first half of the training program and the remaining half will be given to them in stages.

Thewes expects at least 50 percent of those who would undertake the LTTP training program to pass and receive certificates of completion.

He said LTTP had designed the training program to be easily understood by students.

"With our methodology of blended training, we hope to educate the young people to become responsible, independent, dedicated and proactive thinking professionals in their respective fields," he said.

Thewes said a training director from Lufthansa's headquarters in Germany will arrive in June to oversee the implementation of the LTTP training program at JCI. Ann Mallig, inquirer General Luzon

Goings-on

CebuPac's PH-Cambodia route

CEBU Pacific (2GE) became the first and only airline to operate flights between Manila and Siem Reap, Cambodia, when its maiden flight took off from Manila on April 10, 2012 at 1:30 pm, arriving in RGA at 6:30 p.m.

Hun Seiha Smith, Ambassador of the Royal Embassy of Cambodia to the Philippines, and Russ Bowman Jr manager Citizen Line and officials from Manila. Siem Reap passengers.

"Our maiden Manila-Siem Reap took off with a full 180-passenger load, marking a successful milestone for our pioneer operations in tourism," said CEB VP for marketing and distributive Candice Iyog.

CEB now operates a Manila-Siem Reap-Manila service every Sunday, Thursday and Sunday, using the largest and youngest aircraft fleet in the Philippines.

Smart awards

SMART Communications won three major awards from an influential Asian telecommunications industry magazine in Bangkok.

At the 15th Telecom Asia Awards, Smart was cited as the Most Developing Market Carrier in the region over CLI Telekom 5. Smartmoney was selected Telecom CEO of the Year and its pioneering health program called SMRT or the Shared Health Information and Network Exchange won the Best Community Telecom Project award. Smart was also one of the finalists in the Best Mobile Carrier category.

The SMRT program launched from over 200 nominees submitted by the magazine's readers. A 20-person board of jurors made the final choices.

SMRT is a cloud-hosted electronic health information and referral system, accessible by a mobile phone or a computer with internet connectivity.

MCA-P grant

EIGHT municipalities in Antique and Sen Sonia Aklan signed separate memoranda of agreement to the P101 million in grant from Millennium Challenge Corp., a United States funding through Millennium Challenge Account-Philippines (MCA-P).

The MOA were signed with the provincial governments of Antique and Aklan and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for community infrastructure sub-projects under DSWD's Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS), a community-driven development project.

The 15 municipalities, with a poverty index of about 30 percent, are among the 73 municipalities in Aklan and the Visayas that were exclusively selected for inclusion in Kalahi-CIDSS beneficiaries.

PD-B II-ITAR HOTEL IN MAKATI

HOP Ventures president Lim Chee Yong (left) and Roland Jaggi, Worldhotels vice president for Asia Pacific, shake hands following the signing of an agreement for the development of a P2-billion project in Makati. Dubbed Worldhotel Luxury Makati, the 45-story hotel, aimed at the country's growing market for tourists and business travelers, will rise along Makati Avenue and is scheduled to open in the last quarter of 2013. ARLENE CAMACHO

Economy seen growing faster than expected in '12

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE economy may grow faster than originally expected by analysts this year as strong investor confidence, as reflected by upbeat stock market trading, can translate to greater consumer spending, US-based think tank Global Source said.

In a report titled "Animal Spirits!" dated April 2, Global Source said there seemed to be reasons to believe that the favorable momentum would be sustained.

"For the moment, we keep our 4.5-percent gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast for this year, which is based on the expectation that remittances and business process outsourcing (BPO) activity would continue to buoy the economy against still slow exports. But this forecast could most certainly have an upside given the observed shift in sentiment here and abroad," according to the report written by Filipino economists Romeo Bernardo and Marquita Gonzales.

"Confidence could be further bolstered with greater clarity on the government's ability to deliver in terms of public spending and the passage of policies (including the tax-related legislation, particularly the six tax reform bill)," the report said, noting that this legislation could be the key to finally bringing the country to investment grade status and should help generate new investments.

Alongside the bullish reading in the stock market, the report said prospects for domestic growth—or at least the latest perception of it—had also suddenly brightened. It noted that expectations for public spending, especially on infrastructure, were now more buoyant owing to the government's much better track record in disbursement at the close of 2011 (65 percent annually in December).

The report said additional boost was seen coming from the public-private partnership program, as the government had unveiled 17 projects worth about P190.8 billion (or about 2 percent of GDP) for rollout this year.

"Signs of an export recovery and continued remittance strength have similarly been in show of late (with imports recalibrating to the global economy)," the report said.

In the overseas market, the report said the US appeared to be on the mend with consumer spending, while its unemployment rate was going down. At the same time, it noted that the European Central Bank's generous provision of liquidity to European banks and restructuring of Greek debt had saved the euro zone from a financial and economic cliff.

On the Philippines, Global Source said there was optimism for foreign direct investments, which had been stagnant for some time, because of the kind of strong confidence in the economy it noted in reports that investment pledges made last year were at their highest since 1996. "This has been attributed to improved governance by the new administration, which launched a strong anti-corruption drive that has led to better international transparency and competitiveness ratings," the report said.

Taking into account other favorable developments in the economy, such as low external inflation and good fiscal performance—fueling expectations of another credit upgrade, Global Source said some analysts had started revising upward their GDP growth forecasts.

"But listening to the more bearish, though quite rare recently, analysts, we hear a lot of skepticism on why there is not that much reason to celebrate. For one thing, the recent surge of foreign capital into the stock market may have simply been due to a one-time rebalancing of global funds toward Asia and away from European and home-difficult to explain," the report said.

Another risk cited is the PPP program. After the successful bidding of a road project last December, and a single project of the 17 scheduled for the year has so far been launched, the report said.

Dividends as added attraction to investors

Indication of company's fundamentals, prospects

By Dixie Lopez, Contributor

FOR DIVIDEND-ORIENTED stock investors, the rest of 2012 has a lot of promise as many analysts project stable, if not higher, payouts from listed companies.

Steady and increasing dividends from companies that are past their high-growth phase are often an indication of sound fundamentals and say a lot about future prospects. The Philippine companies that are likely to declare good dividends this year include those from the telecom, utilities and media sectors, analysts say.

Amid low interest rates and volatile markets, dividends are likely to be an incentive for new and existing investors to own stocks.

"You can view it from this perspective. If a stock is cheap in terms of valuation: low price-to-earnings, low price-to-book ratios) and if like its long-term fundamental outlook, I would be more inclined to buy it if it can give me a cash dividend that will match what I expect to earn from my placement in the bank," says Apolinario Tan, research head at Eastern Online.

Lee-Tan adds that "cash dividends should at worst be flat compared to 2011," noting that companies in general have room to increase cash dividends provided that profits increased in the past year.

Likely big payers

For this year, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Globe Telecom Inc., Bank of the Philippine Islands, Semirara Mining Corp., Manila Water Co., Inc., Filinvest Land Inc., Filipino Holdings Corp., ABS-CBN Corp. and GMA Network Inc. are among companies that are likely to declare good dividends, she says. Filinvest Land Inc. also offers high rate of dividends because its share price is depressed and valuation is cheap, she adds.

Dividends, which are paid by companies regularly to shareholders and taken from earnings, are one way of boosting shareholder value. Dividend payments can also be a gauge of financial well-being of companies. They may be in the form of cash, stock, or property. Property dividends—which can be shares in a subsidiary company or physical assets—are rare, though. Over the past 12 months, the only Philippine companies that have declared property dividends are Manila Electric Co. and RFM Corp.

Investment driver

Companies that are still growing, however, rarely offer dividends as they opt to reinvest all of their profits to help maintain high growth.

"Dividends are becoming an important driver for investment especially in this all-time low interest rate environment," says Paul Joseph Garcia, senior vice president and equity fund manager at Bank of the Philippine Islands. He points out that the share of dividends to the total return of the stock market is now the past 10 years was about 40 percent. Although capital appreciation is the main source of returns, dividends are proving to be a significant contributor.

Also, dividends are rated 10 percent for resident individual investors and zero for corporate investors compared to 20 percent withholding tax for fixed income investments, he says.

"Dividend play will be important this year," says Garcia. "Investors now are very conscious about investing in companies that give dividends. Right now, that's the trend that we're seeing."

Market participants say one can't blame investors for this trend. Last year, for instance, the Philippine Stock Exchange Index registered a 4.3-percent rise while the average dividend yield was about 3 percent, resulting in total returns of around 7.3 percent. Dividend yield is calculated by dividing the annual dividends per share with the price per share.

APRIL Lee Tan

PAUL Joseph Garcia

Impressive returns

The kind of return is indeed impressive considering the slower economic growth and challenging external market environment last year as the countries debt-crisis mounted.

In its listing of top dividend yields since 2009 in February stock brokerage Lim Brother Securities ranked as number one infrastructure holding firm Metro Pacific Investments Corp. with 9.3% percent average dividend yield, followed by DLTF (7.31 percent), Globe (6.78 percent), GMA 7 (4.14 percent), and Bogal Philippines (3.82 percent). Also on the top 10 of its list were MEC-EMI, China Bank., Bank of Asia, Semirara Mining and Bank of the Philippine Islands. In all cases, these dividend yields either outperformed the decline in stock prices or enhanced its total returns.

Jose Sitoan, research head at AB Capital Securities, says dividend yields declining this year due to the earnings growth last year, although they may be higher in absolute peso terms.

He cautions that when it comes to investing, dividends should be an added, rather than the main, attraction.

"It's hard to find companies that pay dividends that are higher than the money market," Sitoan says. "To the extent interest rates remain low, investors would like to invest in the dividend-paying companies as an added incentive."

Hyundai vehicle sales up 44%

By Amy R. Ritrito

SALES of Hyundai vehicles surged by 44 percent to 8,747 units in the first quarter of 2012, from only 4,712 units sold in the same period last year.

In a statement, official distributor Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. (Hari) said in the first quarter performance was boosted by the strong sales of its passenger car models such as the i10, Accent and the Elantra. These models in particular fueled the 127-percent sales growth that this company registered in the first three months of the year. Sales of Hyundai passenger cars during the period hit 4,207 units.

New passenger car and commercial vehicle models, referring to those that have been in the market for only a year or less, also made significant contribution in Hyundai's first quarter performance.

"As the Philippine economic landscape continues to move from good to great, resilient consumer confidence and Hyundai's outstanding sales performance for the first quarter, We are optimistic that this trend will extend through the second quarter, with the Elantra making waves as Car of the Year for 2012, the launch of the new Hyundai i10N and our countries brand promotion efforts," said Ma. Fe Perez-Agudo, president and CEO of Hari.

For Hyundai alone, vehicle sales rose by 37 percent to 2,246 units from 1,633 units in the same month last year. The increase was lead by the 118 percent surge in the sales of passenger cars to 1,208 units from only 554 units in March 2011.

Light commercial vehicle sales for March, however, fell by 17 percent to 810 units from 1,126 units in March 2011.

Hari cited a number of initiatives to support its optimistic outlook for the year, including the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) Consumer Expectations Survey, which showed that Filipino consumer demand was expected to remain strong. Respondents to this survey perceived the first three months and the coming quarters as a "favorable time" for purchasing consumer durable products.

"Other key influences which underpin leisure purchases and which are evaluated by the survey are the salary good governance policies, steady investment inflows, appreciation of the peso and remittances from overseas workers," Hari said.

'Paeng' Microfinance Awards launched

FIVE MICROFINANCE institutions that have pioneered and popularized micro-credit services in the Philippines will be honored to receive the first Rafael B. Buenaventura award for Outstanding Microfinance Institutions (the "Paeng" Microfinance Awards).

The award, which will be given out in November, honors the late founding governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, who accomplished key policy reforms, including the extensive adoption of microfinance in the local financial system, while at the helm of the BSP from 1993 to 2000.

Nongovernment organizations (NGOs), cooperatives and banks are eligible to participate in the program, which aims to recognize the groups' pioneering initiatives and exemplary work that have influenced and created positive changes in the community.

The five winning MFIs will receive individual assistance fund cash aid to their needs in order for them to improve and strengthen their capacity to become commercially sustainable. Information on the criteria, nomination and selection process and deadline can be found on the SBN Foundation website—www.sbnfi.bspfi.com).

The award is the first major undertaking of the Rafael B. Buenaventura Micro Finance Resource Center Foundation Inc., set up in 2007 by the Bankers Association of the Philippines in continue Buenaventura's legacy in developing and promoting sustainable microfinance through capacity-building.

It is being launched in partnership with Microfinance Council of the Philippines Inc., the Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines Microenterprise Access to Banking Services (BBAB-MABS), PhilyMIF, Foundation, and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

A 2008 global study evaluating the banking environment for financial inclusion found the Philippines ranked seventh in terms of regulatory framework among 54 developing countries surveyed, crying that the Philippines' "Small credit for retail credit, but reporting is limited and no credit bureau as yet exists to enhance borrowers."

The Philippines has consistently ranked high in international surveys of countries with microfinance industries, according to the BSP.

Tribal people's agency gives South African mines go signal

RAUSINI CITY—The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) has allowed a South African mine venture to proceed with drilling operations on ancestral lands, after distributing a Jan. 27 petition for a writ of preliminary injunction filed by residents of Mankayan, Benguet.

In an April 4 resolution, NCIP Cordillera hearing officer Sinai's Maronong denied the request of residents belonging to the group, Ta-ong di Mankayan, to stop for the South-east Gold Resources Inc. (SEGI) from conducting exploratory drilling in Barangay Tabio.

SEGRI is a venture between Gold Fields Ltd., a South African firm and one of the world's biggest producers of gold, and the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co., which developed the Far Southeast gold mining project in Mankayan. Gold Fields acquired 40 percent of the Far Southeast gold project early this year and began drilling on Jan. 3.

Residents have been divided over the project, particularly because it lies within Mankayan's ancestral domains, which is documented as Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title No. CAR-0005 1200-099, the Ta-ong di Mankayan said.

Jeramie Cariaso, a resident of Sitio Bitdamon, said the firm negotiated with property owners but not the rest of the community.

Republic Act 8371 (Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997) defines an ancestral domain as a communally owned tract of land and resources.

The NCIP resolution noted that some members of the Mankayan community had sold their lands to LGRC starting in 2004.

It said the proprietary rights of FSGRI are also protected by Ipra. Section 56 of the law said: "Property rights within ancestral domains already existing and/or vested upon the effectivity of this act, shall be recognized and respected."

The NCIP resolution lifted a temporary restraining order it imposed on FSGRI on March 14.

Louis Parrell, Gold Fields regional manager, said drilling has not yet resumed. "As of now, the work area is silent. There is no movement yet. But we are elated [by] the decision of the NCIP" Parrell said on Saturday.

In a statement, FSGRI said it respected the legal process and waited until a decision was rendered. "We now request the concerned groups to likewise respect the decision of the court of the indigenous peoples," it said.

The Ta-ong di Mankayan picketed the drilling site on Jan. 23, due to fears that the operation would affect their water sources and soil stability.

FSGRI said the suspension of work had cost the firm $1,000 ($776,000) a day.

In its conclusion, the NCIP ordered the FSGRI to file an initial amount of P500,000 as a consultation fund that can be used to mitigate any adverse environmental impact of its drilling operations. Review Column, Inquirer Southern Luzon

DTI keeps safeguard measure on steel angle bar imports

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry (DTI) has extended the definitive safeguard measure on imported steel angle bars to give the local industry more time to implement its adjustment plans and complete efficiency measures.

In a statement, Trade Secretary Gregory L. Domingo said the DTI had "reviewed the findings and recommendations of the Tariff Commission and found it to be of public interest to extend the said measure."

The safeguard measure ordered by the imposition of duties on imported steel angle bars amounting to P3,983.98 per metric ton for the first year of implementation, covering March 10, 2012 to March 11, 2013).

"The Tariff Commission recommended the extension to allow the domestic industry continue the implementation of its adjustment plans to compete with imports. The commission will also given industry players more time to complete their efficiency measures that will help them in the long run," Domingo said.

The safeguard measure will be reviewed yearly to determine if the duties were still needed.

Under the law, a safeguard measure may be imposed for a maximum of 10 years.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement on Safeguards also allows developing country members like the Philippines to impose safeguard measures up to 10 years.

"Safeguards, when imposed, are progressively liberalized. They are meant to provide room for the local industry to positively adjust to competition and achieve global competitiveness over a fixed period of time," noted Trade Undersecretary Adrian S. Cristobal, Jr.

Steel angle bars are angle-shaped steel used for trusses, roof frames, steel frames and steel structures of billboards, transmission towers, and bridges.

Steel users of this product are companies engaged in the construction of houses, condominiums, malls, and infrastructure projects.

BUSINESS

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PH dealers urged to gear up for 'borderless' trade

Local banks 'in the pink of health,' says PDS

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINE capital market must prepare for a "borderless" trade and learn to deal with best issues that Western banks have left unresolved, according to Philippine Dealing System Holdings Corp. (PSE).

The Philippine banking system is "in the pink of health," said president and CEO Vicente B. Cuzillo. "It is well placed to fill in the gaps that unresolved European banks' reduced capability to lend."

Currently, the best way for the capital markets of different countries to intersect is through bonds since agency rate contract using standard terms and ratings, Cuzillo told reporters.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Securities and Exchange Commission are crafting a blueprint for item-regional trade, he said. For this, the Philippines needs core talent. It has to have an aligned regulatory framework while it simplifies its taxation regime.

Aside from having the capability to support cross-regional trading, the Philippine market is also growing in terms of maturity and capacity to participate in regional trade as local investors grow more appreciative of fixed-income products, Cuzillo said.

The PDS executive explained that individual and institutional investors now comprise 35 percent of bond activity.

PDS' target is to improve this to 50 percent "by June or July" he said.

The Philippine Dealing System Holdings Corp. is the mother company of the Philippine Dealing Exchange Corp. (PDEx), which operates the fixed-income exchange.

Private firms began listing with PDEx in August 2008, with Ayala Corp. and Ayala Land Inc. leading the way with P30 billion worth of corporate notes.

Moving forward, he said, he sees more companies tapping the local debt market and more individual and institutional investors taking up available products.

There had also been talk on the possible union of the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) and Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corp. (PDEx).

The success earlier reported that PSE and PDEx leaders have started discussions on unification—an idea that has been thrown around for a while, and which seemingly got a push from regulators.

Such a move is expected to give local companies easier route when fundraising, whether through equities or bonds, and make it easier for local investors to deal with a single entity for their securities needs.

This is seen to make the Philippine market more globally competitive, stakeholders said.

In 2011, the PDS group reported P861 million in net revenues and P345 million in net income.

BUSINESS

Alphaland investing P2.5B in yacht club

Centerpiece of prime business, residential district in Parañaque

By Doris C. Dantes

UPSCALE property developer Alphaland Corp. is investing P2.5 billion in an "ultra-modern" yacht club, which is scheduled to open at the end of 2013 to the company's 32-hectare lakeside property in Parañaque.

The Marina Club is the centerpiece of Alphaland Bay City, envisioned as a prime business and residential district, which is located between SM Mall of Asia and the upcoming Pagcor City.

Alphaland president Mario Oteyza told the company's stockholders in their annual meeting on Friday that this club—master-planned by Hok, the planners for the Dubai Yacht Club—would be the "most modern and most advanced yacht club in the part of the world."

He said the company would start this year the construction of the breakwater, which would cost P1 billion. The whole club—and reclaimed in—cost P2.5 billion, excluding the cost of development of the rest of the 32-hectare property.

The plan is to open the marina first before starting development of the rest of the property. The Marina Bay project is headed by Ayo Dagda.

A unique feature of Alphaland's proposed marina club is that members need not own a boat; all members will be issued points yearly which they can use to charter boats to the club fleet, and enjoy the nautical lifestyle without maintenance and administration headaches.

But for people who already own boats, the berths will have access for about 230 boats of all sizes. All berths can be reached on foot.

Members of the marina club and their dependents will have exclusive access to all the amenities, including the swimming pool, spa, beauty salon, barber shop, gameroom, playroom, screening room, karaoke lounges and a fitness center. It will also a large "banquet-style" restaurants and bars, plus a pool with a bar and lounge.

Alphaland is also undertaking a 300-hectare development called "Alphaland Boracay Gateway" adjacent to the Caticlan airport.

"It is an estate development centered around a polo club," Oteyza said.

"We've finished the masterplan. We're already paving the road and doing pole field next year. We'll see a lot of action there toward the summer when the season peaks in January," said Alphaland chief finance officer Eduardo Vaño.

An initial 200-hectare development in this Boracay project, Vaño estimated, would cost P3 billion.

During the stockholders' meeting, Oteyza also reported the following:

-Alphaland Southgate Tower along Edsa is now 100-percent occupied and "enormously profitable."

-Tropical island-resort club Bukidnon in Quezon will be 100-percent finished this year.

-The Shangrila at the Fort, has been completed, top-off will be held by 2014 and soft-opening is slated for 2015.

Ayala set to issue P15B in bonds by end-April

Issue gets highest credit rating from Philratings

By Doris C. Dumlao

CONGLOMERATE Ayala Corp. is set to issue up to P15 billion in 10-year bonds by the end of this month, providing it with additional cash to expand its portfolios, particularly in its new growth areas of power generation and infrastructure development.

"We hope to be in the market in the next couple of weeks," Ayala Corp. chief finance officer Delfin Gonzalez said in a briefing.

Ramon Ocampo, Ayala treasurer, said the company hoped to secure the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission this week and go to market by April 30.

The proposed bond issue will be redeemable via call options starting on the 10th year and every year thereafter until the 14th year.

The proposed fixed rate bonds due in 2022 were given the highest credit rating of triple A from Philippine Rating Services Corp.

Obligations rated "PRS Aaa" are deemed of the "highest quality with minimal credit risk" and that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment is "extremely strong."

In a statement, Philratings said the rating on Ayala's upcoming bond issue considered the sustainable and strong recurring earnings of the conglomerate as well as cash flows from key subsidiaries and affiliates.

The credit watcher also noted the company's "sound capitalization, multiple layers of financial flexibility, improved debt and debt service profile, value enhancing and risk-mitigating investment management strategies as well as solid brand equity and strong management team."

The rating firm said Ayala's share in the profits from its diversified portfolio of investments in key subsidiaries and associates—such as Ayala Land Inc., Bank of the Philippine Islands, Globe Telecom and Manila Water Co.—are critical to strengthen the holding company's profitability profile.

Ayala Corp.'s consolidated revenue grew by 9.6 percent to P107.5 billion in 2011 and recurring net income likewise increased by 15 percent year-on-year to P45 billion.

The rating firm said subsidiaries dividend from dividends paid out by Ayala's investee companies also translated the firm's cash position.

Together with the prudent application of its liability management strategy, the rating firm said Ayala has maintained enhanced financial flexibility and a healthy capital structure that is well-placed to support its growth initiatives.

"Ayala continues to harness its well-regarded integrity and strong brand equity given its 178-year track record of demonstrated resiliency, ability to progressively adjust to the changing environment, marked competence and its high level of transparency and corporate governance. Its holding company platform continuously embraces partnerships for expansion, both through organic growth of its existing business lines, as well as through transactions and acquisitions that would add value to the company and to the Ayala group as a whole," it said.

Atok-Big Wedge shifts focus to oil, gas exploration

ATOK-BIG Wedge Co., the mining and oil unit of the group of former Trade Minister Roberto Ongpin, will focus its resources on oil and gas exploration instead of mining and is particularly upbeat on its new investments in the Tampakan offshore gas discovery.

The Tampakan field covered by Service Contract No. 72 is off the northwest coast of Palawan along the Recto Bank. It is said to have the potential to become the "next Malampaya" field, referring to the Malampaya natural gas field off Palawan, which is already producing gas to fuel power plants.

"It's not difficult to find mining sites but are hard to decide what (the focus) should be and we're much more interested in the prospect," said Atok chairman Ongpin during the company's annual stockholders' meeting.

In October last year, Atok bought Hong Kong-based Tidewater Holdings Ltd., which owns about 20 percent of Forum Energy plc, a Philippine-focused, UK-based company that is traded and listed on the alternative investment market of the London Stock Exchange.

Forum Energy, which is 64.45 percent owned by Philex Petroleum Corp., has a 70-percent interest in SC72.

The remaining 30 percent stake in SC72 is owned by Mosaic Oils Resources and Energy Inc., which is led by businessman Frederick Francis Rivera's AllTown B.Co. owns 15.4 percent of Mosaic Oils. (Doris C. Dumlao)

BHP Billiton asks DOE for more time to drill well

By Amy R. Remo

OIL EXPLORATION giant BHP Billiton has asked the Department of Energy for 18 more months to prepare for the drilling of a deepwater exploration well within the Cinco prospect off Palawan covered by Service Contract 68.

In a regulatory filing, Alsea Energy Ltd., which has a 33.18 percent stake in SC55, said that BHP Billiton requested last April 16 to extend the commercial deadline of exploration subphase 4 to Feb 14, 2014 from the current deadline of Aug. 3, 2013.

This was issued to "secure an appropriate ultra deepwater rig with specialized well control equipment that will promote safe drilling operations on the proposed Cinco prospect," Otto Energy said.

"Availability of such rigs is currently limited and has been considered in the duration of the exploration.

extension. The requested extension is also expected to provide time for post-well analysis prior to

commitment to any subsequent sub-phase. No specific date for commencement of drilling operations in SC55 can be given until a rig has been secured," the company said.

The SC 55 consortium, led by its operator BHP Billiton, had planned to drill a well within the second quarter of this year. This will allow the group to tap a prospective estimated 2.8 trillion cubic feet of gas and 547 million barrels of oil within the service contract area.

"[Its] main aim is to long-term rig river that SC55 holds significant hydrocarbon potential and the company looks forward to seeing the drilling program executed as soon as is safely possible," the company noted.

ICTSI readies more acquisitions in 2012

By Paolo C. Montecillo

PORT developer International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) is preparing for more acquisitions this year even as the lingering debt-driven downturn in Europe threatens to weigh on revenue growth in 2012.

ICTSI chair Enrique Razon Jr. said the company was "somewhat cautiously optimistic" for this year, saying that doubts on the strength of the global economic recovery prevented the company from painting a rosier picture.

"The general outlook is not, mostly positive. We have seen growth in some areas, but we're slow in other areas," he told reporters on the sidelines of the company's annual stockholders' meeting last Thursday.

Since the start of the year, Razon said cargo traffic and revenues have grown as the company's facilities in Latin America and Asia, investees from pure-to-Eastern Europe, bounced, have dropped.

ICTSI's net income rose 32 percent in 2011 to $190 million amid the continued expansion of the company's global operations.

ICTSI owns or operates facilities in the Philippines, China, Ecuador, Poland, Brazil, Madagascar, Iraq, Georgia, Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, India, Colombia, Argentina, Croatia, Mexico and the United States.

Despite the low flare many outlook, Razon said the company would continue expanding its reach, reiterating its position as one of the world's leading port developers.

MPIC 'task force' to review water, road deals

By Doris C. Dumlao

INFRASTRUCTURE holding firm Metro Pacific Investments Corp. has created a task force to review potential new investments in the water and toll road businesses here and abroad.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange on Tuesday, MPIC, which is chaired by businessman Manuel V. Pangilinan, said the company's board approved the creation of a "special committee" to identify and determine further infrastructure investments in the water and toll roads business, whether in the Philippines or elsewhere.

(Scheme seen to facilitate acquisitions)

The committee will also help determine whether or not to proceed with the water or toll road investments that it identifies, as well as to implement all aspects of those deals.

Finally, the committee will also have the power to approve the structure, schedule and final terms and conditions of the water or road investments, "such as consistent with the parameters presented to the board and as the said deals terms and conditions as the special committee, acting as a body, may deem proper," the company told the bourse.

This special committee was also vested with further authority to name and designate the authorized MPIC representatives to negotiate and enter into agreements with the proper parties and to sign, execute and deliver the relevant offers, term sheet and any other definitive agreements, as well as any and all contracts, agreements and other documents.

The committee is composed of five members, one of whom shall be the chair (Pangilinan) and at least one whom shall be an independent director.

All members of the special committee shall come from the firm's board of directors.

AgriNurture income surges, grows all units

By Riza T. Olchondra

UNITED agribusiness company AgriNurture Inc. posted a record high income of P314 million in 2012, more than double the P95.5 million recorded in 2010 on the back of the consistent growth of all of its business units.

AINI's consolidated revenue surged by almost 41 percent to P2.25 billion in 2012 from P1.6 billion in 2010.

AINI said its farming group nearly tripled its total output to post a 67 percent gain in net earnings. Export revenue jumped 133 percent, buoyed by increased sales of bananas to China, resulting in net income gains of 267 percent.

Domestic trading and distribution, the company's historical anchor, posted 23 percent higher revenue and 26 percent more earnings in 2012.

The group supplies fresh produce to the country's largest retailer, the SM Group, Robinsons and PureGold under its fresh brand, "FOA (Fruit Choice & more)."

"We are particularly pleased this year because 2012 marked solid gains in all of the key business units. Fruit drew one more 'new product model,' and 888 chair and CEO Antonio L. Tee, this year's TOYO awardee for Entrepreneurship. "By far, the year's outstanding performer was fresh fruit exports, which saw quadruple digit gains in net revenues, mainly by feeding China's growing appetite for high-quality fresh produce.

The company also made material forays into retail in 2011, acquiring popular fruit shake retailer The Big Chill, Inc. (TBC) during the third quarter. AINI since snapped up to Big Chill before the acquisition, Tee said.

TBC and AINI's smaller retail businesses contributed an aggregate P88 million in revenue, netting P1.7 million in 2012.

AINI said it plans to build its retail or synergistic retail initiatives into TBC. The company wants to grow TBC's revenue outlook over the next five years primarily through the expansion of its product line.

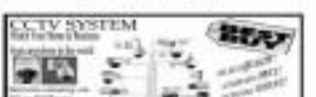
Offering using its stable of brands Superbrek, a chain of fresh fruit shake and dessert bistro with mid-priced products; The Big Chill and Fresh ing, a chain of coffee shops and healthy snacks; Canvasations, a kiosk brand engaged in selling fresh fruit shakes with sugarcane juice; and CWatts, a vegetarian quick-service restaurant (QSR) concept.

TBC also opened Tully's Coffee in 2011. Tully's is a locally-based coffee brand known for "hand crafted" coffee brews and artisan food offerings.

Diversifying from the fresh segment, AIN continued to increase its capacity for exporting coconut juice to come from its BIOI plant in Pulilan, Bulacan. The company entered into a non-exclusive supplier agreement with Vita Coco, the leading fresh coco water brand in the United States, and is evaluating suitable locations for its Tetra Pak processing plant for this purpose.

In December 2012, the company concluded negotiations for an equity infusion from Hank Rowe Capital Partners Fund (Fund) LP, an independently managed fund affiliated with Minneapolis-based Cargill group, one of the world's largest food and agriculture conglomerates.

The fund invested $16.61 million in AINI's P and core common 20.11 percent of the company.



Meralco to include RE sources in distribution system

By Jerry R. Reyes

MANILA Electric Co., the country's biggest power distributor, is gearing up for the possible inclusion within its distribution systems of at least 1 GW megawatts of renewable energy (RE) resources, as admitted or potential drills enforce this story point in terms of its sourcing strategy and rate impact on customers.

In a presentation at the recently-concluded renewable energy summit, Meralco's utility ownership head Lawrence Fernandez identified 13 potential renewable energy projects within its franchise area, based on the service contracts approved by the Department of Energy as of January this year.

Of these, seven are biomass power projects, which are supposed to produce a combined 25.45 MW; three of the potential projects will be powered with wind for a combined capacity of 25.45 MW while solar power projects are expected to generate an estimated 60.68 MW of additional capacity.

Currently, Meralco has three renewable energy facilities embedded in its system namely the 8.35-MW biomass plant of Montalban Methane Power Corp.; the 4.2-MW biomass plant of Bacoor Bay Energy Inc.; and the 1.1-MW hydro facility of Philippine Power Development Corp. (Philpodecor).

When a plant is embedded, it is connected to the distribution system or the system of any user and has no direct connection to the grid.

Recently, Meralco also signed an interconnection agreement with Alternergy Wind One Corp., which is planning to put up a 90.MW wind facility in Ilocos.

Fernandez stressed the need to share coordination among all distribution utilities (DUs) and electric cooperatives across the country and the renewable-energy developers in order to prepare the utilities in accommodating an expected 700 MW of RE capacity within a three-year period, once the feed-in-tariff rates have been issued.

However, several challenges are expected once all these capacities start to come in.

According to Fernandez, one of the most crucial considerations will be the rate impact of accommodating the RE facilities to the end consumers.

"DUs are mandated to supply electricity in its market in a least-cost manner. Improvements in the system, provision of physical connection, changes to operations to accommodate RE plants will result in costs," he said.

"By the franchise law, costs must be minimized to ensure that only reasonable costs are to be imposed on end-users," Fernandez further said.

Another challenge will be the expected "additional complications in forecasting" with the entry of "intermittent" RE sources, adjusting purchases of capacity at the wholesale electricity spot market, and in integrating the embedded RE into the general scheduling portfolio.

Utilities and electric cooperatives likewise expressed to expand, upgrade or reinforce their distribution systems to connect RE plants, some with bi-directional power flows.

Pause in BSP rate cuts to keep bond yields low

By Bernie W. Damicog

BOND yields will stay low as an more policy rate cuts are expected for the rest of the year, particularly because inflation a forecast to rise, often slightly.

BMO Group said in a research note that, following the decision last week of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to keep key rates unchanged, it appears that the overnight borrowing and lending rates have reached their "lowest for this easing cycle" at 4 percent and 6 percent, respectively.

"Current policy rates already reflect the central bank's view that (year-on-year) inflation will be 3.1 percent this year, which is at the bottom of its 3-5 percent target range," the financial services provider said.

"Further rate cuts would be likely only should inflation show signs of averaging less than 3 percent this year and next," it added.

The Singapore-based group said that while the latest inflation figure is set at 2.6 percent year-on-year as of March, the full-year average is not likely to fall below 3 percent.

DBS economists do forecast that consumer prices will rise at an average of 4 percent in 2013.

"For bonds, a progressive flat trajectory for policy rates is good news," the group said. "Policy rates are low and likely to stay low in the coming months. This should ensure that bond yields no one stay low."

DBS observed that liquidity conditions "have tightened somewhat" since September as shown with the upward pressure on interbank rates.

Even then, DBS believes that overall liquidity should remain good enough to allow the government bond yields to stay low.

"We maintain our view that market interest rates on average are likely to be lower in 2013 than they were in 2012," the group said.

DBS's benchmark 10-year bonds, which averaged at 6.46 percent in 2012 and are currently at 5.43 percent, is not likely to reach an average of 6 percent this year.

BUSINESS

PNOC EC plans to invest ₱20B in new prospects

State-run company firming up coal, power projects

By Amy R. Nuno

PNOC Exploration Corp. the oil exploration and coal arm of state-run Philippine National Oil Co. is investing a hefty ₱20 billion between now and 2016 for the "further exploration, exploitation,development and marketing of oil, gas and coal deposits in the Philippines."

The company's board of directors had approved the "long range" plan, which also includes the construction of power plants to further boost the country's electricity supply, said PNOC EC chair and CEO Geraldine G. Lopez Jr.

PNOC EC earlier said it had begun looking for potential joint venture partners for the construction of two coal-fired power plants, which will be put up in Isabela and Zamboanga Sibugay, where its coal mines are located.

PNOC EC is also developing three new prospective, high-grade coal mines within Zamboanga Sibugay under Coal Operating Contract No.41. These mines would increase the company's coal production by some 800,000 metric tons annually. At present, production within COC 41 is around 150,000 MT a year.

The company also submitted several bids to acquire contracts to explore and develop some of the prospective coal mines in the country, under the Philippine Energy Contracting Round 4 for coal.

For its upstream oil business, PNOC EC is looking to drill an exploration well within Service Contract 63 off Palawan, where two big prospects had been identified: the Alcaudon discovery and the Kalayaan site, which were estimated to hold 222 million barrels and 239 million barrels of oil, respectively.

PNOC EC has also recently taken over the compressed natural gas (CNG) refilling facility of Shell, as the government moves to boost the use of this alternative fuel for transport via the National Gas for Vehicle Program for Public Transport (NGVPPT) of the Department of Energy.

PNOC EC has appropriated ₱400 million for the project designed to provide compressed natural gas fuel to 1,000 passenger buses to bring down the cost of transportation.

Last year, PNOC EC posted a 23-percent growth in its net income to ₱5.81 billion from ₱4.48 billion the previous year. Consequently, the earnings per share rose to ₱1.51 from ₱1.23 in 2010.

It also reported a 14-percent hike in gross revenues to ₱35.45 billion in 2011, from ₱31.02 billion a year ago.

Ethanol firm revives expansion plans

By Doris C. Dumlao

SAN CARLOS—Bioenergy Inc. (SCBI), which built the first integrated ethanol facility in Southeast Asia, is finally pushing through with delayed plans to ramp up its yearly production of ethanol to more than 40 million liters from the current 30 million liters.

In an interview with reporters, SCBI chair Jose Efraim T. Zubiaburo said the company expects to complete the expansion of the ethanol facility in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental by Sept. 15 this year.

By then, the facility is expected to produce at least 120,000 liters of ethanol a day for about 10 to 11 months in a year, from the current daily production of only 75,000 liters.

"Hopefully we can produce more," added Zubiaburo.

SCBI planned as early as 2009 to increase the capacity of its ethanol plant, but plans were put on hold due to problems plaguing the industry, such as the lack of a government policy on import duties.

There have since been revised following recent developments, particularly the Department of Energy's issuance of a much awaited circular that mandated provisions to ensure that local ethanol will be purchased first before bringing in cheaper ethanol from abroad.

It likewise stated the obligations of the market players, including bioethanol producers, oil companies, the National Biofuels Board, and the DOE's Renewable Energy Management and Oil Industry Management Bureaus.

The circular also directed the NBB to "publish a monthly price index for bioethanol every first day of the month based on data from the Sugar Regulatory Administration and Department of Agriculture to determine the reasonableness of the price of locally produced bioethanol."

SCBI currently supplies ethanol to Petron Corp. and also sells electricity to the power grid. *Amy R. Nuno*

BPI takes steps toward early adoption of Basel 3 standards

By Doris C. Dumlao

ASIA-LED Bank of the Philippine Islands is taking steps toward the early adoption of stringent capital adequacy ratio (CAR) requirements under the Basel 3 global framework, according to BPI chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala.

"Even with our strong capital base, we have taken the first steps to consider the early adoption of Basel 3 rules as announced by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, another step to strengthen our overall capital adequacy under the new global standards," said Zobel in a report to stockholders last week.

Universal and commercial banks are required by the BSP to adopt by Jan. 1, 2014, the capital adequacy standards under Basel 3, which introduces a complex package of reforms designed to improve the ability of banks to absorb losses, extend the coverage of financial risks and have stronger firewalls against periods of stress.

Based on the BSP's proposal under Basel 3, the minimum CAR must be raised from 10 to 12.5 percent.

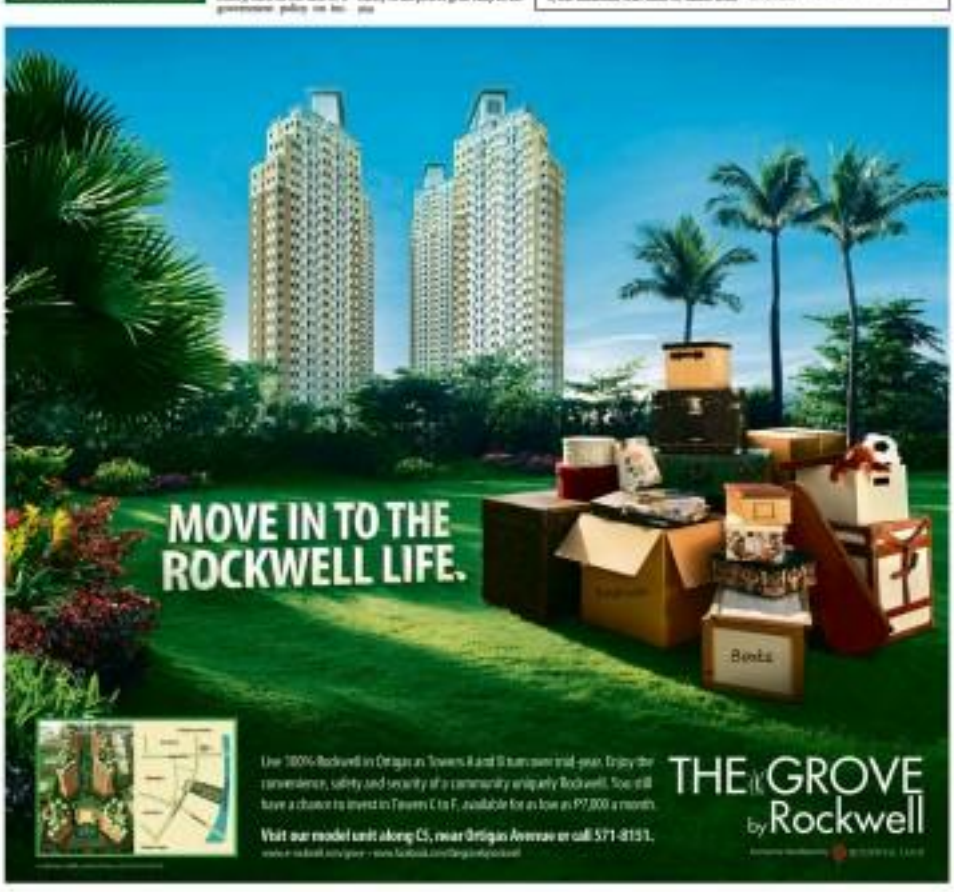
The subsidized tier final (Internal Capital Adequacy Assessment (ICAAP) document for 2013 to the BSP and an internal minimum capital adequacy ratio of 10.25 percent was defined to include risks other than credit, market and operational risks," Zobel de Ayala said.

"A management action trigger (MAT) of 11 percent, 100 basis points over the required minimum, was set to prompt the bank to take the proper action to always ensure an adequate level of capital," he said.

To date, BPI has a CAR of almost 13 percent. Counting only the tier 1 or core capital, the ratio is 11.1 percent.

Based on its ICAAP, BPI president Aurelio Montinola III said the bank was projecting 12 percent increase in lending in the next three years, which meant that no further capital would be needed until 2015.

"The other way to put it is by making good profits. Even if we dividend out (more), that's the cheapest way of raising capital without going to the markets," Montinola said.



BUSINESS

NIHONWELD
www.nihonweld.com

Oil prices climb on German confidence, US earnings

Worries of weak demand for crude take back seat

NEW YORK—Encouraging news about business confidence in Germany helped drive oil prices higher Friday. It was a respite from persistent worries about weaker energy demand as Europe's debt crisis still lingers in the air.

Benchmark US crude rose 76 cents to finish at $103.03 per barrel in New York, while Brent crude added 76 cents to end at $119.76 in London.

In Germany, the biggest economy in the European Union, a key survey found that businesses confidence improved in April from March, the sixth straight month it rose. The survey showed confidence was up not only for current conditions, but for the next six months as well.

Oil prices also rose along with US stock markets amid strong earnings profits from several major corporations. The Dow Jones industrial average was up almost 1 percent in afternoon trading. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq were higher as well.

Benchmark oil has stayed in a range between $101 and $105 per barrel this month as investors assessed global economic growth and looked for fresh news about the standoff between Iran and Western countries over Iran's nuclear program. They've also narrowed down Europe's financial crisis and a slowdown in China's economy.

Talks between Iran and the West are scheduled to resume next month. The US, Europe and other countries think that Iran may be working on a nuclear weapon. Iran has denied the charges.

Iran exports more than 2 million barrels of oil each day. The European Union and the US have imposed sanctions that make it tougher for Iran to sell its oil. In response Iran stopped selling oil to Britain, France, Greece and Spain, although those countries weren't getting much Iranian oil to begin with.

Iran's oil minister said his country might not refer to Israel, Western countries if the 27-nation bloc failed to show more flexibility toward his country ahead of May's meetings.

In other trading, heating oil rose a little more than 1 cent to finish at $3.14 per gallon, gasoline futures fell about a cent to end at $3.14 per gallon and natural gas rose 3 cents to finish at $1.93 per 1,000 cubic feet. AP

IMF raises $430 billion for crisis firewall

WASHINGTON—Members of the International Monetary Fund will discuss future arrangements after the IMF raised $430 billion in new funds for crisis-intervention, with China and other emerging economic giants taking part.

After weeks of making pledges for to "global fire wall," the fund said Friday the BRICS group—China, Russia, India and Brazil—had helped put it over to goal.

"We have commitments that are worth of $430 billion. That almost doubles the lending capacity of the fund," IMF managing director Christine Lagarde said after meetings of the IMF and the finance chiefs of the Group of 20 economic powers.

The figure "signals the strong resolve of the international community to secure global financial stability and put the world economic recovery on a sounder footing." The BRICs and a handful of middle-sized economies came in with $68 billion at the end, though specific amounts were not mentioned.

That came on top of $200 billion promised by the euro zone, $60 billion from Japan, and $15 billion each from Britain, South Korea and Saudi Arabia early pledged $15 billion.

Smaller amounts from the Nordic countries, other European governments and Singapore filled out the total.

"We all agreed it was absolutely essential to have the fire wall put up at this time," said Thaweesin Viswanathanon, chairman of the IMF's policy-making body.

But, he added, "The fire wall is a necessary but far from sufficient condition to resolving the crisis. AFP

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BUSINESS Monday

Will life's cycles improve traders' prospects?

By Amabelle Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

"BE LEARNING to chart and recognize the events, encounters and consequences you must now undergo during the optimal times for growth," says business consultant and spiritual guru Master Choa.

"This applies to determining the best times to sign contracts, buy properties and establish new markets or product lines. If there is a need to end a partnership, knowing when the energy for releasing old relationships (without much conflict) is available can help to keep a business running smoothly," he adds.

Del Fe is a Chinese American born in the Philippines and now based in Houston, Texas. He is an author and educator who has lectured in over 80 countries. He many other concerns include life after death, energy medicine, wellness, meditation and yoga, martial arts, healing, and customs for corporations, children, teenagers and families.

He preaches the universal law of right timing as reflected in the seven cycles of life. His teachings may seem vague and esoteric to some, including this writer. The implication is that there will be some chinese with a one-day workshop, as an initial step perhaps.

Thus, the author will hold a one-day workshop on April 26 at Hilton Plaza (02) 91, Diliman Center, Pasig City (Call Ronan 0918-888-8 1981). This will be on the Seven Cycles of Life, to be followed on April 29 by a workshop on Life After Death.

"Life is characterized by cycles," says del Fe in an online interview. "There is the flow and rhythm of Nature's seasons. Life, like Nature, is qualified by particular cycles. There is a time to destroy a time to create and a time to preserve. Knowing when to position business or personal situations is a hidden ingredient to success."

He believes that "understanding the 7 Cycles of Life reduces conflicts and increases in the office and at home. It's like operating with the current instead of fighting it. You will be able to predict when your co-workers will flow with creative flow or be depleted, when money comes easily and when you are most likely to be deceived. You will be able to determine when your competitors are in their strongest times of the year."

This knowledge is expected to help you "to leverage the element of timing to make better decisions, and reduce the uncertainties and second-guessing that result in stress and anxiety. It gives you the wisdom to create win-win solutions for your business, staff and in the marketplace."

Del Fe (2nd from right), with students Anil Sagapa from India, Ronan Cruz from the Philippines and Dr. Cecilia Villa of the United States.

According to del Fe, one can apply the formula of right timing in starting a business, or buying and selling property. "Timing does affect outcomes in life. It's like planting, if you plant during the typhoon season, you may not expect a good harvest. But if you plant during the right phase of the dry season, when conditions are ideal, you are likely to harvest a high crop yield. Our lives and our businesses work the same way."

He adds: "There are times in the year and in the seven-month Soul Cycle when attendees are more likely to enter, when your top executives are harder to control, or when people are more pleasant and more productive."

And—take note—"one of these is just before a birthday. Therefore, it's best to avoid major decisions at that time, if at all possible."

To love and to work

By Nico A. Carey

WE often hear about efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in many parts of the world including the Philippines. In recent years, our country had documented a dramatic increase in cases of HIV/AIDS infection. Among the most at risk are young gay men.

This prompted researchers (Hidalgo, et al., 2011) to investigate risky sexual behaviors of young adults in their early twenties and thirties working in business process outsourcing (BPOs)...the booming industry in the Philippines. Findings showed that the combination of several factors such as participative youth culture, age, income, mobile technology, work structure and work environment contributed to a heightened risk for HIV infection.

Most researchers, such as the one cited above, were focused on preventive efforts to stop the spread of HIV. However, one cannot help but wonder what life is like after getting HIV. Specifically, given the prevailing perceptions about people with HIV, how are those identified as having this illness treated in the workplace?

Early this year I conducted an in-depth study on the lives of eight young gay men living with HIV. Participants were mostly professionals working locally and abroad who had been diagnosed with the illness for about a year. Results suggest that experiences of stigmatization such as feelings of isolation, alienation and shame were the main emotional experiences upon disclosing their HIV status in the workplace.

After disclosure

Shared feelings of isolation were echoed among participants when they revealed their experiences of disclosure in the workplace. One participant (a recently-unemployed being fired) said:

"They seem to have isolated me...Even if I continue with work, there was a set of limitations in terms of what area I'm placed," he said in Filipino.

Eventually, he was forced to leave his work because, according to his supervisor, his status would tarnish the reputation of the organization. Other participants shared experiences of constantly feeling belittled by co-workers and other people who look at them from head to toe.

To have and sustain work for one's family is one of their primary concerns especially since most of them were forced to resign from work due to their condition. They all expressed the desire to gain a stable job to support themselves and their families.

"I want a stable job primarily to help my parents so that they may enjoy the blessings in their old age, to help them with all their needs," one of the participants shared in Filipino.

Deep family ties push them to strive harder and live beyond their illness. Moreover, their sense of who they are as young adults is greatly bolstered by their advancements within the family. They draw personal meaning from their work or whatever work activity they engage in after being forced to leave their organization. This is reflected in their efforts to remain independent and competent.

Despite the daunting obstacles faced by people with HIV in the workplace, a reevaluation of their emotional experiences showed their determination to accept one's person beyond the illness, to continue fighting for oneself and be empowered, to disassociate from their values that discriminate and assert financial independence. These show that given proper guidance such as what the international organization Global Fund provides, people with HIV can still be competent employees and effective members of the community.

How can they be helped?

There is a great need to provide substantial support especially in the first year after diagnosis. Government, as well as non-government organizations may beef up campaigns to encourage HIV testing, provide sensitive counseling services, and set up mechanisms for job search and placement of people with HIV. Companies may explicitly include HIV testing as part of a comprehensive health package, as well as craft policies that safeguard HIV positive employees from discrimination.

From a person learning to live as a person living with HIV, the journey of HIV positive employees continues toward greater appreciation of life. Despite great problems and daunting obstacles, their lives speak of what really matters regardless if you have the illness or not—that is free human exercising one's capacity to work in order to take care of and show love to one's family.

(Nico Carey is a Ph.D student in social-organizational psychology at the Ateneo Department of Psychology. The article was based on his research, "Developing People in Contexts: Integrating interpersonal phenomenological analysis and ecological systems perspective in exploring young gay men living with HIV. For comments and questions, please email ateneowork@ateneo.edu)

WORKPLACE WISDOM

Carrier takes airconditioning to extremes

By Amy R. Remo

ONLY DIESEL and extreme weather conditions can provide the true test of durability for any air-conditioning unit.

And one of the best places, perhaps, to put that endurance under close scrutiny is in a tropical country like the Philippines, where airconditioners literally work like a home—turned up to hell blast, operating double hard to ward off that sweltering heat.

While like many other many places, like smokiness and heavy rush hours, loading cooling solutions provider Guangzhou Carrier Aircondi. Refrig Co. (GAC) however has its Condura line of airconditioning units, which it claims to be "the only aircon, deluxe line carrier-built for extreme Philippine conditions" including withstanding 41 Fifth summers and strong La Niña typhoons.

Condura Extreme is built to withstand even the harshest Philippine conditions and is uniquely suited for our climate," says Allie Rodriguez, sales director for GAC.

"It proves this claim, GAC recently put the Condura Extreme head to head with other airconditioning units in the market in what it dubbed as a "shootout of durability, performance and adaptability."

GAC says that while other brands present only the condenser from one unit, one must have parts that convene over time, Condura Extreme has a noncorrosive plastic base and rust protection coating called Duralcon on all major parts including the evaporator, compressor, fan motor, connector tubes and condenser.

This is one will likewise ensure the Condura Extreme's durability even in the harshest conditions, even when they are used in resorts, industrial plants near bodies of water and city structures that have constant pollution, GAC further claims.

Apart from its durability, the Condura Extreme proves to be energy efficient as well. It features a patented energy savings plug and powers off compressor when room desires electricity room by up to 40 percent.

The Condura Extreme

An added value to the Condura Extreme is the five-year warranty on the compressor and a two-year warranty on all other parts. The unit also comes with an added five-year guarantee on rusting before against rust on Duralcon protected parts.

"We are confident enough to stand by the durability and reliability promise behind the Condura airconditioner product line," Rodriguez says.

Titanic

DAS HUSSEIN'S years ago this month, the 800ft Titanic, touted as the largest ship at sea when it first sailed, sank in the North Atlantic Ocean. Its story was romanticized in a 1997 film written and directed by James Cameron. Devastatingly, the film gets replayed on television and it engages the viewer in many unforgettable ways, not just through the towering budget figures but Brittonal characters Jack Dawson and Rose DeWitt Bukater, but also through the many scenes that really feel like a prescient social commentary of conditions that seem to obtain over the next one hundred years.

For one, the Titanic story mentions the prevalent consumerism among its citizens in today about risk management. Those who voluntarily talk about sentiments the scene and preparing for it can take several pages from the Titanic story to illustrate the ships and structures of enterprise risk. Why did the ship owners setting on lifeboats and provide only a third of the ship's capacity? Why not the maximum passenger capacity? Surely, that scenario was not in the minds of the ship owners who were determined to build a first-class ship to forge ahead of their aggressive competitors. The chief, one reason was intellectual arrogance. Only a faultless seamless proprietary pride from the sort of delusional thinking that one's creation is irreducible. The owners of the ship must have felt that the lifeboats were superfluous because

Joey A. Hernandez

the giant Titanic was unsinkable in the first place. But unsinkable the Titanic didn't turn out to be. And as it sank, two-thirds of its passengers sank to their death. The Titanic is a country-old reminder that size and dominance can dangerously lead to complacency. Again and again, the example of the Titanic has been reinforced by many events of recent storage. The "sinking" of Bernard's in Mexico, a global behemoth that put the popular Blackberry in the hands of over seventy million users worldwide, is one such event.

For leaders and managers, the Titanic is more than just an excellent case study in risk management. The story overflows with moments of current-day management theory and concepts. Among other things, it is a story about leadership with accountability about limited scope who carry out their humble part of the mission, and about admirable professionals who perform all the way end.

The ship captain, Edward John Smith, was the quintessential leader who took full responsibility for the tragedy and dutifully walked into a fate no better than those of his least fortunate followers. In today's world, Smith's equivalent would be a leader who says sorry and then permanently takes the flogging. Rare? The most upbeat statement one can make is that "they don't produce a lot of 'em these days." A century later the world produced the antithesis to Smith. A man named Francesco Schettino, the pathetic ship captain of the ill-fated cruise ship Costa Concordia which capsized off the coast of Italy. Schettino, instantly disregarded ship-wreck protocol by helping himself to one of the lifeboats while many passengers were desperately screaming for attention.

Are today's captains of enterprises and governments, Smith-like? To be fair, there are some who fit the mold. But an honest analysis of what brought us to our current state of affairs suggests that the leadership type of leadership is gaining traction in a world that has become too cynical and indifferent to weigh it.

The luminous upper decks of the Titanic housed the wealthy and the mighty. These were men with lofty titles and great pedigrees including J. Bruce Ismay, chair of the company that owned the vessel. The sense of power and privilege must have permeated their spacious cabins. Immense power sometimes drives one to intellectual impunity or the sense that one can get away with anything. This affliction, which the fictional character Gordon Gekko so obviously had, removed all sense of accountability and thicken the desire to become a better leader, a better follower, and a better professional.

In contrast to the opulence of the upper decks, the bottom of the Titanic teemed with hundreds of sweaty and dirty workers who looked after the ship's engines. These workers had little access to the many rooms and had the extreme chance of being saved in the event of a shipwreck. It is fair to assume that they perished while habitually following orders to fix the boiler room or the rest of the passengers fought for dear in the lifeboats. So even more painful thought is that they perished in a tragedy that was not even of their making. Talk about sheer horror in the unlikeliest places.

In the world of business, this would be a classic case of a follower suffering the consequences of his leader's grave miscalculations. When the ending leader bears the same consequence, the enterprise bears a great downturn but it gains character. It is this character that prepares the company for even tougher challenges in the future. But when the erring leader shields himself from the consequences of his errors, the enterprise keeps a cowardly coach and develops a sub bully that will see unlicensed even the lightest of tests in the future.

It is easy to act professionally while operating in one's comfort zone. The real test comes when conditions become not threatening. In the Titanic were many professionals who helped make the ship unsinkable during their own untimely sinking precautions in front the lifeboats. The musicians knew that death was only a short while away. Yet they performed like professionals possessed by their craft. The story of the musicians is not fictional. In the film, the bandleader, after telling his colleagues to hold up their instruments at the end of their performances, calmly declared "gentlemen, it was a pleasure playing with you tonight." Grateful and tranquil acceptance of an undeserved outcome is professionalism of the highest order.

Why the Titanic is not one of the most widely discussed cases in business schools is a mystery. We need not look for recent cases of workplace conflicts and tensions to deepen our understanding of business. As a real-life event, it exposed human folly and frailty. Yet it revealed the strength residing within the inner fragile human frame. We need not be disturbed by the fact that we continue to be unbearable to the same weaknesses today, a hundred years later. All we need is the humility to accept that nothing ever exists, whether in business or in our personal lives, is immutable. Such acceptance will evoke a sense of accountability that will enable us also to become better leaders, better followers and better professionals.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and it does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is Chief Executive Officer, Vitrix, Inc. and the MAP President in 2000. Feedback at mgt@globelines.com.ph. For previous articles, please visit map.org.ph).

EU parliament slams Argentina's YPF seizure

Spain takes first retaliatory measure against Latin American trading partner

BRUSSELS—The European Union parliament on Friday condemned Argentina's move to seize control of the YPF division of Spanish oil and gas company Repsol and demanded that the EU take action against Buenos Aires at the World Trade Organization.

The parliament also called on the EU to look at the "possible partial suspension of the unilateral tariff preferences" as a way of punishing any country that attempts to nationalize a European company's assets.

Argentina says it is making the move—which would take control of 51 per cent of YPF, leaving Repsol with a 6 percent stake...because Repsol has not invested enough in the country's oil industry.

Support in Argentina for seizing the formerly state-owned YPF unit to drop that even further President Carlos Menem says he's in favor of its expropriation from Repsol. Menem, now 81 and a senator, said he will vote for the re-nationalization next week, even though he knows many will criticize him. As president from 1989-1999, Menem sold off many state enterprises in a privatization wave that he says Repsol took all its profits out of the country and failed to invest anything in Argentina.

Repsol YPF SA and Spain have slammed Argentina's re-nationalization of YPF as outright "pillaging" and an attack on free investment. The company's chief executive, Antonio Brufau, told reporters Wednesday that YPF is worth $10.5 billion, and he valued Repsol's stake at $10.5 billion.

Argentine Planning Minister Julio de Vido, meanwhile, met Friday with Brazilian officials about the move, and said reciprocity that his country would like Brazil to increase its Argentine market share from 8 percent to 11 percent. He also said that assets of Brazil's state-run oil giant, Petrobras, would not be expropriated.

Brazilian Energy Minister Edison Lobao said that Petrobras invested $580 million in Argentina last year, and planned to invest an equal amount this year because "it is good business" for the oil company.

The European parliament called the re-nationalization "an attack on the exercise of free enterprise and the principle of legal certainty" which hurt Argentina's investment climate.

The resolution, backed by the major parties in the 754-member legislature, also calls on European Commission to take up the issue at the WTO and the G-20 and explore measures to better protect EU interests in future.

Spain also took its first retaliatory step Friday announcing it would approve a measure promoting domestic biodiesel fuel production, thereby reducing biodiesel imports from Argentina. Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria said political and diplomatic retaliatory measures were under consideration but that no decisions had been made.

Last year Spain imported 700 million euros' worth of Argentine biodiesel that was used to agricultural fuel, the Industry Ministry said Friday.

The Group of 20 industrial powers has a summit in Mexico in June that could bring together the President Cristina Fernandez and Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy together face to face for the first time. AP

China high court spares tycoon's life in loan case

BEIJING—China's supreme court on Friday rejected the death sentence of an ex-tycoon who was convicted of illegally raising money for her business in a case that prompted a public outcry.

The Supreme People's Court said it was sending 51-year-old Wu Ying back for resentencing in her home province of Zhejiang in China's southeast.

Wu was found guilty in a rags-to-riches story in which she built up a multibillion-dollar business. State media painted her as an example to Chinese female entrepreneurs. But the story was reversed of illegally raising 770 million yuan (a about $120 million from investors in 2005-07.

Wu's penalty prompted an outcry on Internet bulletin boards by supporters who said it was too severe in a system in which corrupt Communist Party officials often escape punishment.

All death sentences are automatically reviewed by the Supreme People's Court, but in an apparent effort to mollify public anger, the court took the unusual step of announcing it had received Wu's case and would review it "with care."

On Friday, the court said Wu's case would be sent back to the Zhejiang Higher People's court.

"I feel relaxed after I saw my daughter Wu Ying's death penalty has not been approved," Wu's father, Wu Rongchang, wrote on the microblog site Weibo.com. "But I still cannot relax as I do not know the final result. The suffering keeps on going, and I thank you all again."

The official Xinhua news agency reported Friday that the supreme court—acting after Wu admitted her crimes after she was arrested—ruled that immediate execution "may be inappropriate" in Wu's case.

The case has prompted debate over the financial difficulties Chinese entrepreneurs face in raising money in a system where the state-owned banking system channels most lending to state companies.

The communist government has launched a pilot project in Wu's home city of Wenzhou, known for its thriving private economy, aimed at making it easier for entrepreneurs to get bank loans.

In March, Premier Wen Jiabao told reporters that the case shows that the development of private lending has not kept up with the economic and social needs of China. AP

AIALASKA

ALASKA MILK CORPORATION

TO THE SHAREHOLDERS OF ALASKA MILK CORPORATION

April 23, 2012

This is to advise you that FrieslandCampina Investments Holding Company Philippines, Inc. ("FC Philippines") is making a tender offer for all of the remaining issued and outstanding common shares of Alaska Milk Corporation ("AMC") held by AMC shareholders other than FC Philippines and its affiliate, Campina Zuivel B.V. (renamed FrieslandCampina Werknemers B.V., hereinafter, "FC Werknemers") and up to 237,000 common shares that may be issued by AMC pursuant to the exercise of stock options previously granted by AMC to, and which, as of April 4, 2012, have vested with and are exercisable by, qualified beneficiaries under AMC's Executive Employee Stock Option Plan ("EESOP"). More specifically, FC Philippines is offering to acquire all of the remaining issued and outstanding common shares of AMC (and any common shares that may be issued pursuant to the EESOP) held by AMC shareholders other than FC Philippines and FC Werknemers at the tender offer price of P24.00 per share.

The acquisition of AMC shares by FC Philippines is subject to the mandatory tender offer provisions of Section 19 of the Securities Regulation Code. Accordingly, FC Philippines will conduct a tender offer for all of the remaining issued and outstanding common shares of AMC (278,794,984 common shares representing approximately 31.48% of AMC's total outstanding capital stock) and up to 237,000 common shares that may be issued pursuant to the EESOP, in accordance with the Securities Regulation Code and its applicable implementing rules and regulations.

The terms of the tender offer shall be announced separately on the date of the commencement of the tender offer.

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BUSINESS

UK twin brothers charged in stock-robot swindle

Some 75,000 US investors duped by scam

WASHINGTON—US investors thought they were buying access to a stock-picking robot named "Max" Intrinsi, they paid millions to teenage twin brothers in England who now have civil fraud charges for an alleged penny-stock swindle.

The robot didn't exist.

The stocks picked were companies that paid hefty fees to Alexander and Thomas Hunter, late 16 when the alleged scheme began in 2007, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) said Friday. As stock prices jumped, the Hunters' clients dumped their shares for a profit.

"While touting their supposed breakthrough investment technology on two websites, the Hunters were racking up fees as stock promoter through a third," said Thomas Sjordahl, chief of the SEC's office of market intelligence, in a statement.

The SEC filed a civil suit against the Hunters, who are now 20, in US District Court in Manhattan Friday.

Officials are asking the court to block the twins from the securities industry and order them to return the money they collected from investors. They are also seeking additional financial penalties.

It all began with a website called daytradingrobot.com, according to a narrative described out by the SEC.

The Hunters drew roughly 75,000 investors, who were promised stock tips generated by a sophisticated program. The investors, most of them in the United States, paid at least $1.2 million for newsletters revealing the robot's insights and a "home version" of the robot software.

"The longer Max is allowed to run on a computer... The More Advanced He Becomes!" one of the Hunters' websites crowed, according to the SEC complaint. The final "home version" cost an additional $97. For that, investors got a program that grabbed ticker symbols fed to by the Hunters.

The twins collected an additional $1.9 million from companies seeking Max's endorsement, the SEC said. On the site equitypressrelease.com, Thomas Hunter wrote that his website attracted thousands of visitors each day many of whom followed his investing recommendations.

"Give a small to this list of people endorse a stock price," the website said, according to the SEC complaint.

In 2008, after they promoted a music publishing company called DSMG Media Inc., its share price doubled to 69 cents. Another round of promotion in 2009 lifted DSMG's stock to $1.06. DSMG has not traded above a penny since September 2010. AP

Disney studio chief quits after 'John Carter' bomb

LOS ANGELES—Disney movie studio boss Rich Ross stepped down on Friday, taking the fall for at least a couple of over-budgeted bombs as Hollywood drives away from taking risks on big blockbusters.

His resignation comes after two years in a row of nasty March surprises, ironically both having to do with the Walt Planet. Last year it was "Alice Stuck Mirror," a creepy animated movie that lost $70 million. This year, it was "John Carter," a sci-fi action movie set on Mars that resulted in a $200-million loss for Disney.

Ross, 50, said in a memo to staff that he no longer believed his role as chairman of Walt Disney Studios was "the right professional fit."

The move was not surprising to analysts, coming a few months after studio marketing chief MT Carney also departed because of a string of lackluster releases. AP

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

FORMER police outpost now used as an archaeological office shows the care of benevolent-neglect seen in many places in Lumbini.

Between two worlds in Nepal

Lumbini Garden is a 1- x 3-mile protected area whose heart is the Sacred Garden, birthplace of the Lord Buddha

ON MY FIRST night in Lumbini, I woke up before dawn to the murmurs, deep sound of bells from the Tibetan monastery down the road, calling monks to early morning meditation.

Following soon after came the distant sound of a single drum, becoming louder as it approached my window, until I saw a solitary monk in yellow robes beating his flat, paddle-shaped drum to redware with his measured steps.

I met a wandering monk on a previous trip here who told me his next vowed to give up a permanent home in exchange of wandering the world on foot, hearing their drums while walking in search of enlightenment.

Despite the sound of jackals piercing the early morning silence, the stillness of Lumbini makes some pilgrims feel that enlightenment could be within reach. However, it is the villages outside the shrine, the local community has different priorities as it struggles to survive from day to day.

Lumbini is a place between two worlds, of Buddhist serenity clashing with the poverty of everyday life in this dust-covered corner in rural Nepal, where there are only two small general stores, one restaurant, and an irregular bus that picks up passengers for Bhairahawa, the closest town half an hour away, where all supplies come from.

In Nepal, "power shedding" means four to six hours without power each day. Our office power had not yet been delivered, so we sweated it out, worked in dim light, stopped work when our laptop batteries discharged, and reconnected with the oc-

A/SUNDAY G3

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

drop the razor ditch the wax

Why? Technology's come such a long way. Now you can get rid of unwanted hair safely and permanently for whiter, smoother, softer hair-free skin.

With LaserLight you'll enjoy sexy hair-free perfection.

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No more itchy bikini bumps! Gives you the freedom to wear the skimpiest bikini all year round!

No more stubble! Lets you have stubble-free, silky, sexy legs anytime you want.

PRESERVE YOUR FAMILY HISTORY, BUILD A FAMILY TREE!

Every family has its own unique story and history. Illustrate yours by creating your family tree with the Ancestry app. Building a family tree is a fun and exciting way to get to know your family's history. Create your family tree in Ancestry and make it a source of information for years to come. Ancestry allows you to do this by letting you add pictures and life events like birthdays, weddings, graduations and baptisms. See your family tree grow as you add people from your mother and father's side. You can even sync it to the web and get tons that might lead to long lost relatives. Start building your family tree today! In knowing about your ancestors, you surely love to get to know yourself in the process too.

| APP OF THE WEEK |
ANCESTRY

Ancestry app is available for iPhone and Android users. To download the app, iPhone users can visit the App Store or iTunes while those using Android can go to https://play.google.com/store

Download Ancestry with Globe PowerSurf. To register dial *143# and press call. For free. Choose among which PowerSurf Plans may you have. You can also get more information for free by texting SURF to 8888. Get to know more about PowerSurf's Unlimited Kill Shock Promotion by going to http://surf.globe.com.ph/globe/powersurf/postpaid.

THE OLD municipal hall of the town of Romblon, Fort San Andres, dated 1440-1560, is attributed to Fray Agustin de San Pedro, ORA, popularly called El Padre Capitan; 19th-century Cathedral of San Jose in the capital town of Romblon, one of the 24 colonial churches declared as National Cultural Treasures

NCCA to launch National Heritage Month in Romblon

ROMBLON is the opening venue of this year's celebration of National Heritage Month by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

The celebration is in fulfillment of Proclamation No. 1357 on Aug. 11, declaring the month of May as National Heritage Month "in recognition of the need to create among the people a consciousness, respect and pride for the legacies of Filipino cultural history and love of country."

Leading the celebration is NCCA Subcommission on Cultural Heritage (SCH), headed by Regalado Trota Jose. This year, the theme is "Tanid: Growing, Caring, Carrying on..."

The theme and the celebration, said Jose, seek to give "a glimpse of the legacies of the past and how it extends to shape the present and the future."

It is also "a recognition and celebration of the different aspects of our national cultural heritage—our traditional art forms and practices, important cultural structures both movable and immovable, and other objects of national importance whether tangible or intangible."

Primarily known as the country's leading producer of quality marble, Romblon is also home to many heritage sites. Located at the southern part of the Luzon Island cluster, the province is composed of 20 islands strewn on the Sibuyan Sea, with the islands of Romblon, Tablas and Sibuyan as the major ones. Being in the center of the Philippine archipelago, the province is the center of supplies distribution for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Among the heritage sites in the province are the 18th-century Cathedral of San Jose in the capital town of Romblon, one of the 24 colonial churches declared as National Cultural Treasures; Fort San Andres, the old municipal hall, 18th-century Spanish bridges and heritage houses.

The grand launching is on May 1-2. A mall opens with an exhibit at the Romblon Capitol Building at 7:30 a.m.

The formal opening will be at 4 p.m., to be attended by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Eduardo C. Peñalosa, NCCA chair Dr. Jose M. de Leon and President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III. A ceremony at the St. Joseph's Cathedral featuring choirs, a violin performance and ritual rituals using traditional Romblon songs will take place at 8 p.m.

The following day, there will be a walking tour of heritage sites in the town of Romblon, a lecture on the experience of the "Bati-nesia Artists" Village in Baguio by Ces Aquilizan, and a cultural presentation in the town of Odiongan.

Aside from the grand launch, there are also other National Heritage Month activities.

The Cultural Mapping and Planning Workshop, facilitated by heritage conservation expert Jun Encanto, is in March and April. Participants in key cultural workers, tourism officers and teachers of Romblon, the workshop aims to "document the significant heritages of the province, not just as a solid reference of future preservation but to adapt them to contemporary contexts around the creation of a meaningful and enriching life of every Romblomanon."

Conducted in Romblon and Odiongan, topics include local history and movable heritage (April 20- 21), and built and cultural tourism (April 27-28).

A capacity building workshop is also on the planning in the areas of historical management, facilitated by Elmar Ingles; visual arts by Nemesio Mirandilla; theater arts by Edward Perez; and music by Angelo Aquino. There will also be workshops and lectures on local history writing, establishing an art gallery or artists' village, project conservation practices for built heritage, establishing an archives office and preservation of archival documents, library services and appreciation with storytelling using local stories, and establishing a museum and basic museology to be conducted by the six committees of the SCH.

The SCH has decided to extend the celebration up to the end of the year with activities and events lined up throughout the year. The closing of the celebration is set December.

The NHMC steering committee is composed of Regalado Trota Jose, head of SCH and the National Committee on Archives; Imelda Lozar, head of the National Committee on Art Galleries; Maria Viola Floresca, head of the National Committee on Historical Research; Antonio M. Santos, head of the National Committee on Libraries and Information Services; Jaime C. Laya, head of the National Committee on Museums; and Antonio Julian Montalvan, head of the National Committee on Monuments.

NATIONAL Heritage Month 2010 poster

NCCA Subcommission on Cultural Heritage head Regalado Trota Jose

For more details, contact NCCA Public Affairs and Information Office (PAIO) head Rene Sanchez Aquino at 5102 5275/5209, 5272/5210 loc. 412 to 413, or 0928.5083657; or Ruby S. Ilao, project manager of the National Heritage Month celebration 2010 at (632) 5209.882, 5272/512 loc. 212, or 0928.2219163. E-mail nccapaio@gmail.com, log on to www.ncca.gov.ph.

ARTIST Ben Austria celebrated his 49th birthday last March 23 at his Antipolo residence. As is previous birthdays, he gave a grant to a charitable institution. This time he chose the Tahanan Walang Hagdan in Cainta, Rizal. With the artist (in tee) are Antonio Co, Vergie Cortes, Sheryl Co, Marites Co, Betty Goi of the Goi Peace Price Awardee Foundation, Mary Divine Rondain, Rowena Ong and Helen Go.

Vermont Coronel at Drawing Room

"SPIRIT of a Place," by local Coronel (r.), is first solo exhibition, to run now April 28-May 22 in The Drawing Room (GF, Metrostar Building, 107 Metropolitan Ave., Makati). (tel. 8540000 loc. 8613/815). Coronel's mixed media and works on canvas do not look like the girl of the space that John Hay there. Detailed and controlled, the hyper-real artworks are an orchestration of photography, stencil and aerosol. Each work is composed of blended blocks arranged into layers that overlap by grid and range to create depth and detail. He treats the urban environment as subject and site of his paintings, announcing his commitment to the streets as he reacts to it.

"SPIRIT of a Place," by Vermont Coronel

Art documentary screenings at Ayala

The Ayala Museum, in partnership with Art21, presents the sixth season of "Art in the Twenty-First Century," the Peabody Award-winning documentary series on contemporary art. "Art21 Access '10 provides an opportunity for organizations around the country and the world to experience a retrospective of Art21 dialogue in accessible, contemporary art and the ideas it expresses," said Susan Sollins, Art21 executive producer. All screenings at Ayala Museum will be held at 4 p.m. at the 3/F Lecture Room. Admission to the screenings is included in museum admission tickets.

Cabigting et. al at West

Which Galleries presents simultaneous exhibits (4/28-May 16, Artists Alwin Cabigting's "Cabinet Mania Lisa" and Sarah Gandia's "Tracked" in Gallery 1, Richard Lee's "It's More Fun in the Philippines" in Gallery 2, and Sam Kyoungtaek's Landis in Gallery 4.

Cabigting continues cackling artifact-like real-life pieces, this time focusing on "the back of Mona Lisa." The works have undergone two stages of installation sets: the years, one with the boxes and the other without. Both are at mind in exact dimensions as the original "Mona Lisa."

Gandia's "Escape" is an attempt to find healing and strength after experiencing sexual harassment two years ago. With this exhibition, she hopes to move on and to throw off the shackles of such intrusion into her personal space. Gandia also presents scenes recapping from similar traumatic experiences.

Lee is thrilled at the thought of inviting locals to the opening of his latest solo exhibit whose theme will be centered on Philippine culture.

Kyoungtaek presents images of despair and anonymity.

West Gallery is at the Mary Grace Building, 4918 Bel-Air Avenue, Quezon City. Call 411-6088 or 411-6871, visit www.westgallery.org.

Bohol paintings in Pangiao

Paintings depicting Bohol are on display in "Kamalig ning Bol-anon" at the Amorita Resort in Panglao, Bohol (tel. 854-0084; www.amoritaresort.com).

Art workshops at Robinsons

The Public Information Office of the City of Mandaluyong and Robinsons Malls are organizing the Lutang Mandaluyong arts festival until Apr 4-29 at the Robinsons Pioneer, Mandaluyong. The festival features an art exhibit by Mandaluyong artists and performances by the Mandaluyong Children's Choir, Mandaluyong Ballet Group, Mandaluyong Ballet Group, Mandaluyong Rondalla Group, Mandaluyong Philharmonic Choir, Teatro Porsha of Rizal Technological University, San Felipe Neri Chamber Singers and Mandaluyong Rondalla Group.

Arts workshops on sculpture, drawing and painting, and printmaking will be held on Apr 6-10, 26 and 27, respectively.

VISUAL ARTS

"FLIGHTS in Nature" by Ritz Guerra.

Still lifes at Brunsuan gallery

"Still Life, Still Lives" looks at art between pure decorative art and exhibition of images of social commentary. The exhibition consists of a series of images of garden flowers, fruits and vessels that borrow attributes into daily sights in Filipino communities. It runs April 29-May 21 at Galeria Nueve, Bonifacio Global City (tel. 8556131; e-mail info@galerianueve.com; visit ghb.to/qa.com). Featured artists are Dakota Dee, Stella Estrocon-Tejao, Eric Elejorde, Phyllis Zabaleta, Rogelio Lobarbio, Paolo Angeles, Ferdinand Cacnio, Thomas Dapsing, Randall Elka, Jojo Elumba.

Salvador Cabrera at Altro-Mundo

Artworks by late Filipino artist Salvador Cabrera Sr. and his son, Jose Aguilar Cabrera, will be featured in "Pamana," ongoing in Altro Mundo Arts Contemporary (37 Granada St., Makati, M: 0917/979-01; e-mail us at art@amundo.multiply.com; visit www.altromundo.com.ph) until Apr 9 '10.

Elder teacher to National Artist Napoleon Abueva and Benedicto "Bencab" Cabrera, Salvador Cabrera Sr., made a name for himself as a remarkable painter, illustrator and cartoonist. He is considered as one of the country's most prolific illustrators of his time. Proudly called artists the all-in-one "Quiding," he was in the league of known newspaper cartoonists like Ed Tiongson, Ben Alcantara, Mauro Malang Santos, Roddy Ragodon and Hugo Pineda. One of Quiding's famous written work was the cartoon "Bisdak," a farm boy and his adventures in the city. Quiding's paintings were also known for soulful images of everyday scenes—children playing on the streets, vendors or tending goats, carabao pens or riding their roosters.

Marina Cruz at Bencab

"Inside Out," works by Marina Cruz, will be shown at the Gallery Indigo and "Everyday Objects—The Making & Unmaking of Indigenous Crafts in Art," will be on show at the Front Gallery, both at the BenCab Museum in Km. 4 Asin Road, Baguio; tel. (6074) 5091864; www.bencabmuseum.org).

ONE of the newly unveiled public parks at the Bonifacio Global City by the Bonifacio Art Foundation Inc. is the North Poolan Park, located at Triangle Drive and 11th Avenue. It was designed by the late artist Frank Berja as a place of tranquility.

The main attraction of North Pocket Park is the art installation called "Revival" by sculptor Wilson William Baldemor (above). According to Baldemor, his 18-ft.-tall "infinity"-shaped brass artwork signifies "unbreakable," nature's perpetual regeneration, and vitality of earth's creatures. For those who see it for the first time and appreciate it deeply, "Revival" has become a source of creativity and inspiration.

Youth leaders to gather in Iloilo for Church heritage pilgrimage

By Lorrine Lee
Contributor

OVER A hundred youth delegates, including those from the 30 Roman Catholic churches declared as National Cultural Treasures by the Philippine government and as World Heritage Sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), will gather for Angat Kabataan 2012, a heritage pilgrimage, May 1-3, in Iloilo City.

Organized by the Society of Diocesan Archivists of the Philippines (SDAP), the event is intended to strengthen leadership among the younger generation and to develop their capabilities in connection with conservation of the country's cultural heritage.

Bishop Julio Garai, chair of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) Permanent Committee for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, endorses the heritage pilgrimage, saying that the bishops' commission "is cognizant of the gains the youth will obtain through the Angat Kabataan 2012."

"This relevant endeavor aims to make available general knowledge about heritage conservation and the importance of these heritage assets to forming future generations," Garai writes in a March 21 endorsement letter.

He continues that "through this event, the youth are also expected to volunteer national heritage in schools and barangays as embodied."

To be held in cooperation with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), Angat Kabataan, which is on its third year, will officially be a part of the National Heritage Month celebrations.

The event will feature talks and workshops to be given by representatives from Iloilo, an organization dedicated to heritage preservation that started from the initiative of high school students in Jaro, Iloilo City, invited speakers from Escuela Taller, a Hispanic arts and crafts training program for the underprivileged Filipino youth; and experts on Philippine heritage, such as Fr. Gaspar Ilargan, OP of the Society of Dominican Archivists in the Philippines, Ophelia Rivera (consultant of the Intramuros administration), and Lito Zulueta (Arts and Books editor of the Philippine Daily Inquirer).

Angat Kabataan director is former NCCA commissioner Fr. Harold Santiago, OSA.

Another highlight of Angat Kabataan 2012 will be a city tour around historical sites in Iloilo, which include the centuries-old Molo and Church.

Institutions supporting the heritage pilgrimage are CBCP's Permanent Committee for the Cultural Heritage of the Church and Commission on Youth; the Archdiocese of Jaro; San Agustin Museum; the University of San Agustin; and the Escuela Taller.

Gulf Jardin Bonquerin at 0915-7720709, fax 7324632, e-mail to jarangalkata@yahoo.com.

A WANDERING monk walks along the side of the road traditionally bearing his paddle-shaped drum.

Japanese architect Kenzo Tange has prepared a plan for the Lumbini Garden

MOST VILLAGERS living around the Sacred Garden subsist on agriculture.

Between two worlds in Nepal

From page C2

side world when our WiFi snapped back to its inconsistent life after power returned.

It was unclear to complain; the only thing to do was to simply accept whatever came.

The hallmark of Lumbini is its aura of benevolent neglect. Everything, despite its international development, has stood still for a very long time.

"Lumbini Center is at the intersection of the Siddhartha Rajpath Buddhawa Road, which is reported to be the principal approach route to Lumbini Garden," says the jolly of report's on my desk. That is just what it is, a crossroads and nothing else.

Nothing that you see from that crossroads gives hints at having arrived anywhere, much less to a sacred place.

World Heritage list

The intersection, the only route to the Lumbini Garden, is nothing more than a dusty crossing that looks as if it leads from nowhere going onward nowhere. There stands a skeleton of a village, a loose cluster of low mud-brick houses like something ruin.

It BC had her down the road to the main theater entrance to the Lumbini Garden, a 1- x 3-mile preserved area whose heart is the Sacred Garden, birthplace of the Lord Buddha, inscribed on the World Heritage List.

A stone pillar erected in 249 BC by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka still stands in the Sacred Garden. An inscription on the pillar attests to its being the birthplace of the Buddha.

Centuries later, an archaeological dig revealed the well-worn stone a few paces away from the pillar that marks the exact spot where the Buddha was born.

Lumbini is one of the four holiest places in the Buddhist canon that draws pilgrims from the Buddhist world. The other three holy destinies are in India: Mahabodhi temple in Bodh Gaya (where the sacred bodhi tree where the Buddha attained enlightenment. Shortly after, he would be preached his first sermon in Sarnath, and ultimately passed into nirvana at Kushinagar, where he was cremated.

If the India's Buddhist destinies, pilgrims flock to massive temples and stupas. The Lumbini experience is different.

Zen experience

Situated in the flat, rural Terai Plains of Nepal only 9 km from the Indian border, here pal. grimes have no temple to pray in, nothing imposed as an open space surrounding the birthplace of Lord Buddha's modest, ing bread, flat agricultural fields that amount to the most cupped Himalayas on the horizon. It is a Zen experiment, arriving in nothingness.

In 1978, the United Nations commissioned the renowned Japanese architect Kenzo Tange to prepare a master plan for the Lumbini Garden. Tange carved out a 1- x 3-mile rectangular area, divided it into three equal sectors of 2 square each.

The northernmost sector is the New Lumbini Center, where the museum, auditorium and Lumbini International Research Center are located in imposing all-brick structures, vaulted buildings designed by Tange in the 1990s.

In the sector the everyday facilities are to be located—hotels, hospital, administration office, visitor information center and facilities such as ticket booths, shops, toilets, conveyances and baths, bus terminals and parking lots.

Not much of this sector has been constructed, only the research center and museum stand today.

The central sector is the Monastic Zone, where Buddhist countries have constructed monasteries which shelter their pilgrims—Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Japan, China, Korea, Tibet and, coming from a monastery away, Germany and France.

At the southernmost sector is the Sacred Garden, the birthplace of the Lord Buddha, where archaeological remains and Ashoka pillar are left untouched.

An enormous levee, a circular embankment enclosing an artificial lake, forms a protective layer around the sacred archaeological remains where pilgrims sit cushions on meditation mats.

It could be the way of the Buddha, that to reach stillness at the Sacred Garden one must learn to give up what one has taken for granted, like the comforts of home; prayer 24 hours a day, and just focus on the essentials from Lumbini one thing.

NOTHING inside village even hints at its being an entrance to one of Buddhism's holiest shrines.

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CONCERT raises funds for Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church.

SHOWCASE of Sagada's beautiful landscape. For the concert, the Cuyo San Jacinto and Cagayan State University Ensemble, under the baton of Fr. Rodolfo C. Aquino, will team up with the UST Symphony Orchestra.

Concert for Sagada

SAGADA. A pine-clad town in Mountain Province, is known for its idyllic sceneries and places of cultural interests. It boasts of cloud-covered mountains, magnificent caves, graceful rice terraces and dramatic falls for adventurist tourists to explore.

The dominant denominations/religion in Sagada is the Episcopalian/Anglican. Church stone they were the first missionaries who arrived in the area circa 1907.

The Catholic mission of the Vicariate of Bontoc-Lagawe is still confined to the far-flung Barangay of Kiling, which is 30 minutes drive from the town center. The explains why until now there is no Catholic church in the town proper for Catholic tourists to visit or attend masses.

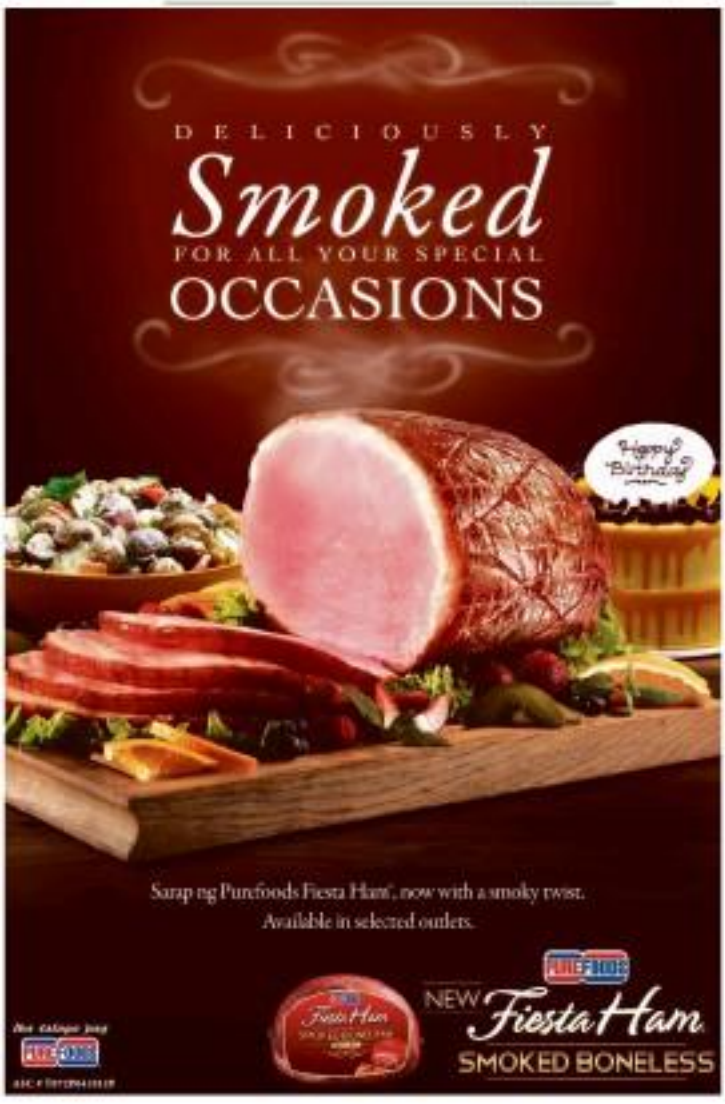
"In our desire to expand the Catholic presence in Sagada, we are the need to construct the construction of a shrine that will promote devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and at the same time serve as the new center of our mission in the place," said Fr. Pablo Lumanog, mission head. "The shrine will also provide devotional destination for Catholic tourists who are looking for a church nearby where they can pray or celebrate the Eucharist."

In order to augment the limited resources for this project, the Dominican Friars in Bontoc of the University of Santo Tomas is helping the vicariate in organizing a fundraising concert in UST Chapel this coming May 8.

The renowned choir of Cuyo San Jacinto and Cagayan State University Ensemble under the baton of Fr. Rodolfo C. Aquino together with UST Symphony Orchestra will entertain the audience with their rendition of classical repertoire.

The concert "Sagada in My Mind: A Night of Music and Love..." aims to raise the awareness and generosity of the faithful in supporting the Vicariate to achieve the dream of establishing a Catholic church in such beautiful town. Tickets and sponsorship form for the concert is available in the parish office of UST Chapel.

To support the construction of the church, call Fr. Lumbrum Pablo at 0919-4.690.00, 09.16944756. Donations may also be deposited in PNB Buenos Branch account number 160-52-02-800-13 (account name: Vicariate of Bontoc-Lagawe).



WATERFALLS at Kiling

National Book Development Trust Fund grantees bared

THE NATIONAL Book Development Board (NBDB) has announced the grant awardees of this year's National Book Development Trust Fund-Kaunlaran sa Aklatan Inhibit: "Ang Kahalagahan at Lipunang Pilipino sa Harap ng Pandaigdig na Bukas 1168-1910," by Ma. Theresa T. Dellio-Juan, for environment and biodiversity category; "Traditional Medicine in Colonial Philippines, 16th to the 19th Centuries," by Ma. Mercedes G. Planta, for health and wellness; and "The Image of Pure Pillar" by Antonio R. Tuquero for the novel.

Each received a P200,000 grant.

Twenty-four applications for book writing grants were received by the NBDB, 13 manuscript proposals for the novel, eight for environment and biodiversity, and four for health and wellness.

The awarding ceremony was held on April 22 at the Plaine Garden, Quezon Memorial Circle, Elliptical Road, Quezon City.

The NBDB is now accepting applications for grant for 2012 in the following topics: 1) Habitat Rehabilitation and Social Impacts; 2) A novel or book length literary work originally written in Cebuano; and 3) Documentation/codification of any traditional knowledge.

You can download the application form, with the rules and regulations for the grant at www.nbdb.gov.ph. Deadline of submission of applications is on May 30.

The National Book Development Trust Fund was established exclusively for the support and promotion of Filipino authorship and the completion of [illegible] manuscripts or research works for publication, especially in science and technology and in subject areas where locally authored books are extinct few or nonexistent.

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

And the bands play on

Bands serve as a potent laboratory for composing and conducting. Antonino Buenaventura, Felipe de Leon Sr., and Lucio San Pedro, Hilarion Rubio, Alfredo Buenaventura, Francisco Feliciano all have their roots in band music

By Antonio C. Nilo
Contributor

THE CULTURAL Center of the Philippines was the venue of a band festival held April 10-14. Bands from Metro Manila and adjacent cities and towns, and from Baguio City, as well as Bukidnon in Mindanao, participated. The representation was wide as the bands came from different sectors such as schools, communities, the military services.

The Philbands Association headed by professor Herminigildo C. Ramos spearheaded the event that the CCP through the efforts of its president, Raul Sunico, staunchly supported.

The festival included a daylong workshop and band clinic, facilitated by Satoshi Taguwara, one of Japan's young composers who had scored outstanding band music compositions. He was joined by Stephen Piaz of Toronto, Canada, who not only performs but also designs and builds modern clarinet and experimenter historical woodwinds.

In a message, Ramos underscored the significance of the festival in promoting and appreciating band music, and elevating its quality to the highest standard for Philippine bands to acquire global recognition.

Listening to band music is a favorite pastime in the country, as several bands proliferate all over. This glorious tradition has been a boost in cultivating the talents of Filipino musicians, as many of the country's leading composers and conductors were at one time or another exposed to this particular genre.

Potent laboratory

Bands serve as a potent laboratory for composing and conducting. Our leading musicians, such as Antonino Buenaventura, Felipe de Leon Sr. and Lucio San Pedro—all National Artists for Music—Hilarion Rubio, Alfredo Buenaventura, Francisco Feliciano and many more have their roots in band music.

It is on this note that Sonico and Chris Mallado, CCP artistic director, headed the

AND THE BANDS D2

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPPH BY BIS ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY BY PH_LEDESMA

DICK TRACY BY JOE STATON AND MIKE CLARK

LOVE-MOTS BY ELIZABETH HOGWOOD

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

RHEO MACHINE BY FRANK ABRERA

SEIH BY DANIEL SHELTON

MUTTS BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY

DUSTIN BY STEVE KELLEY AND JEFF PARKER

TULDOG BY MARA CELI

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You have more energy today. Your aesthetic sensibilities and talents in visual matters are high. Invest your resources wisely.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You will put curiosity to work in some today, meeting members around in search of new things. This is because you want to explore other perspectives, and you're personable and fun.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You will be very effective in all your communications with others today. That's why this is a wonderful day for those of you who sell, market, teach, act, promote or entertain for a living.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your energy is not your strongest point today, but you're good at dreaming with others that others will jump on your bandwagon. This is the day to lobby the troops!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're very ambitious and in terms of expressing it. Especially where the bottom line is concerned, you're a force to be reckoned with. Your instincts are right on target.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You will especially detect your own hidden motives today, especially in the realm of educational matters. You feel confident, and you want to be there.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You'll get to spend time with others today, but you'll also be very much concerned about your own personal agenda. You have energy to exercise your own point.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Discussions with partners and close friends will be lively. Others have strong opinions today, but so do you!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You are encouraged to act on your own today, because you have the energy, combination and determination to do so. You also might be encouraged by some one else's encouragement and support.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're in a highly creative day. You can, if you're encouraged and prepared to do so. You're also encouraged by those of a more practical nature. Some opportunities will be presented to you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Family discussions will be quite lively, and you'll have to work hard to get your point across. Others are not as receptive to your ideas as they usually are. Exercise extra patience.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're unusually sensitive today, which is why you will get the upper hand in any disagreements with others. Your sense of humor and keen observation will be the key.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs or www.sudoku.com

Answers to previous puzzle

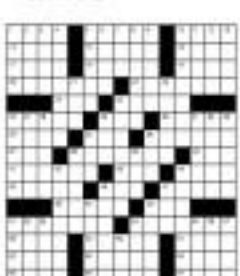
7	1	3	9	4	8	5	2	6
9	6	8	5	2	3	1	7	4
2	4	5	7	1	6	9	8	3
1	8	9	3	6	4	2	5	7
3	5	6	1	7	2	8	4	9
4	7	2	8	9	5	3	6	1
8	3	4	6	5	9	7	1	2
6	9	1	2	8	7	4	3	5
5	2	7	4	3	1	6	9	8

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

4					1			6
	5			8			3	
		2	5			1		
6			8		7	3		
	7		9		3		4	
		3	2		6			8
		7			4	2		
	4			2			9	
9			3					1

Difficulty Level ★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



And the bands play on

From page D1

effort of Philbanda, which aimed to place Philippine band music in the "international mainstream" of the genre.

A hearty sampling of symphonic sound was easily had April 12, when three bands, Bulacan State Band University, Philippine Coast Guard Symphonic Band and UP Symphonic Lab came to enlivening matters.

One noteworthy the first band that hails from a faraway place such as Hukbalaxan to grace the occasion. A band of Bukidnon State University, it is composed mostly of youngsters. Youthful enthusiasm was written on their faces as they performed under the baton of Pepito D. Macarine.

It was on the novelty piece "Encantamiento Paloma," arranged by the said conductor, that the audience applauded well, as individual instrumentalists stood and played their respective arrangements with gyrating rhythmic punch.

An elegant and grand symphonic sound was in the offing as Philippine Coast Guard Symphonic Band took its turn to perform. Three sambahan danced the hours, taking turns in conducting.

Reserve set the tone in Arturo Tolidao's "Kapuso Boss," a Spanish march. The rendition had character, rich in dynamics, color and vibrant intonation. He wrapped up the performance with Ben Machelly's "Introduction and Fantasia" with Andaya.

CLOCKWISE from bottom to left: Hermelights Racers of the UST Wind Orchestra; Carmencita Zuñiga of Baguio City National High School SPA Band members of Philbanda (above and right) perform at the CCP lobby April 12 in the opening shows; Zuñiga leading Baguio City National High School SPA Band during CCP's Bandu Rito Bando Bam 2012

Dramatic heights

In the medley of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Phantom of the Opera," arranged by Warren Barker, glorious listening to symphonic sound abounded. Truly, it was the treatment of the thematic trivia from one instrument to the other, projected in a symphonic sound, that marked the difference between plain marching band and symphonic band, which deserved to be heard on a legitimate stage. In the latter, the sound offered as soaring or balance of tone was etched with vivid colors.

PO3 Eduardo J. Ivanovets led the band with astounding earnest, never mind the stiffness of his gesture, which ushered to convey the essence of the music.

In another piece, Ifawara Bayadera's "Hira of the Gods," the band conducted by PO2 Walter D. Castillo, music soared into dramatic heights which heightened listening to the hilt.

Energy and exuberance characterized the performance of the UP Symphonic Band, led by Budoy Ambar. Valentin Marbella's "Dalampasigan" was a treat to hear.

Camera Club of the Philippines holds exhibit at CCP

PICC III 1,000 Boards and Country Club and the Cultural Center of the Philippines will hold a photo exhibition, "Frame of Mind," featuring works of Camera Club of the Philippines at the CCP Findlay Vicente Manansala (2/F hallway) April 25-June 2. Among the photographs are winning entries of the on-the-spot photo competition held in March at Pico de Loro Cove on Hamilo Coast participated in by members of Camera Club of the Philippines.

Camera Club of the Philippines is the oldest and most prestigious photographic club in Asia. Founded in 1928, it is composed of members coming from varying backgrounds, ages, levels and walks of life. The club holds a monthly

FROM LEFT: Photos by Leo Ningas, Armond Ayuca and Rito Balagtas

thematic photo competition and on-the-spot contests.

The exhibit will open April 25, 6:30 p.m., in the main lobby of CCP Guests will be led by Elizabeth T. Ty, president of Costa del Hamilo Corp.; Raul M. Sonico, CCP president; and Rhonda S. Rosas, president of the Camera Club of the Philippines. The opening program will be followed by ribbon-cutting ceremony at Pueblo Estudio and cocktail reception.

We could have danced all week

By Walter Ang
Lost Boyzz

DANCE, DANCE and more dance will be celebrated during this year's International Dance Day and Philippine National Dance Week.

Contemporary Dance Network Manila (CDNM) is staging Contemporary Dance Map-Luzon 2013 and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) is hosting a dance competition and workshop festival.

Philippine National Dance Week, celebrated on the last week of April, began in 1993 as per Proclamation 1264 signed by President Fidel Ramos.

International Dance Day was founded in 1982 by the International Dance Committee of International Theater Institute (ITI) of Unesco and is celebrated every April 29—the date commemorates the birthday of Jean-Georges Noverre, a French dancer and ballet master regarded as the creator of modern ballet.

Contemporary dance

Contemporary Dance Map Luzon 2012, featuring different

contemporary dance groups, is directed by Ara Villanueva and Elena Lamug.

Participating groups include UP Dance Co., Ateliernet, Chameleon Dance Theater, Lyceum of the Philippines Dance Troupe and Myra Beltran's Dance Forum, among others.

CDNM, chaired by Angel Lawsin-Bagaloso, UP Dance Company artistic director, is an organization of contemporary dance companies, artists, school-based organizations and institutions, whose goal is to promote contemporary dance in the Philippines.

The show is part of CDNM's Contemporary Dance Map series, where the group "maps artistic spaces for dance in a performance tour of these spaces." The series started in 2005 and has since continued annually.

The Contemporary Dance Map series has included performances in spaces such as the UBIX line (2010) and the streets of Antipolo (since in Cubao (2011).

"Contemporary Dance Map Gala 2012" runs April 26, 28 p.m., Dance Forum Space, 366 West Ave., QC. Students and senior citizen discounts available. Call (0917) 851-0732.

Contests and workshops

The National Committee on Dance of the NCCA is holding Junior Prize: The NCCA National Dance Competition as part of its efforts to promote dance in its various forms.

Now on its fourth year, the competition will be held April 23-24 at Music Hall of SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City.

Ballroom, hoodlumul and ballroom will be the categories on the first day. Contemporary and hip-hop will be on the second day.

The dance committee, chaired by Shirley Fuddi-Cruz (Shirley Fuddi Cruz School of Ballet ballet director), notes that the contest aims to high light competition as a means of motivation for artistic excellence and encourage emotional fitness through teamwork.

The NCCA is also hosting Dance Xchange 2013: Philippine International Dance Festival April 27-30 at Cebu International Convention Center, Cebu City.

The festival's theme is "Cultural Connectivity through Dance." Dance Xchange, now on its fourth year, will have activities like dance performances, dance workshops to be conducted by dance directors and dancers from participating countries, master classes, action lectures and culture events.

To register for the workshops contact 5272009; 5272234; 0917-5299500, 0908-551-8511; e-mail pnd@ncca.gov.ph; visit www.ncca.gov.ph.

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French conductor Michael Cousteau and PPO to team up again for classical concert

FRENCH CONDUCTOR Michael Cousteau will return to the Philippines to conduct again the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra for a special concert on April 28.

The concert will combine the arias worked on during the singing workshop (Effendi), Mozart, Bizet) and the Symphony in D minor by Cesar Franck.

His return will be accompanied by two voice experts of the Paris Conservatory: Stéphane Weyrhowski and Florence Grégoire. The two experts will give a week-long "Voice Master Class.

"Songs and Symphony" is a FrenchPhil event organized by the Embassy of France, Alliance Française de Manille and Rizal Library, with the support of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Air France-KLM, BDO, Pernod Ricard Philippines, the Philippine Choral Directors Association, le Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris (département supérieur pour jeunes chanteurs), le jeune chœur de Paris and St. Silvestre Manila.

Ticket prices: Orchestra Center, P800; Orchestra Sides, P500; Balcony 1, P300.

Ticket discounts: 10 percent for students, 20 percent for senior citizens, AFW members and he persons with disabilities.

Call Sabrina Bonnefi, AFW Cultural Coordinator, at 8957585, 8957442, cun 0017-8928968, e-mail sabrina@afl-lisaro.ph; visit www.afl-lisaro.ph, 209 Nicanor Garcia St. Bel-Air II, Makati. Also contact Astrid Roscoe, French Embassy Cultural Attaché, at 8576020, e-mail: astrid.roscoe@diplomatie.gouv.fr; visit www.ambafrance.ph.org

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UST Singers' Fidel Calalang is guest conductor in Korea

FIDEL Gomez Calalang II, conductor of the **internationally acclaimed University of Santo Tomas (UST) Singers**, was featured **as guest conductor in the 52th anniversary** concerts of the "Seasonal Concert: Choir of Daegu at the Daegu Cultural Center of Korea on April 22. He conducted classical and popular works in the choral repertoire.

Gomez artist was 26 year old promising soprano Ms. Charlene Pilar Lopez, UST Voice student of Gloria Cacnio and soloist of the UST Singers, with whom she has gone with on for several international concerts and competitions.

Calalang took part in the workshop concert, April 5 to 22, a project of the Seasonal Music Concert under Jae Joon Lee, international conductor and visiting professor to the UST Conservatory of Music. Professor Jae has performed with different orchestra around the world.

Calalang is the founder and conductor of the two time Choir of the World winner the UST Singers. He is a professor at the UST Conservatory of Music Piano Department and Head of the Conducting Department. He was chosen Outstanding Alumnus of UST for Arts in 2003. He also won the Best Conductor Prize at the Tours International Choral Competition in the Netherlands and the First Prize/Choir Category of the International Competition for Choral Competition in California, United States of America in 1999.

New collections of dance and music criticism

THE UST Publishing House has published "Love-Love: Perspectives in Transmission and Pedagogy of Musical Traditions in Postcolonial Southeast Asia," by musicologist Ramon Pagayon Santos, and "Walking Through Philippine Theater," by dance and theater critic Basilio Esteban "Steve" S. Villarete.

Santos Santos' Love-Love is an exhaustive compilation of studies and observations on how the traditional music of Southeast Asian nations such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand are translated and transmitted to a contemporary audience. Santos explores the varied strains of Southeast Asian music through painstaking field research and numerous interviews with people involved with traditional music in the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, as well as with those concerned with bringing this music to a wider, modern-day audience.

The first of three volumes, "Walking Through Philippine Theater" collects almost Villarete's dance and music criticisms, published in various journals and broadsheets here and abroad. The last and second volumes gather Villarete's dance criticism. He observes and commentates on various issues on Philippine dance, his profiles on dancers both local and international, and his reviews on dance productions mounted in the country beginning in the 1960s. The third volume contains his theater criticisms.

Each chapter in the book is preceded by interviews with scholar and critic Ruth Elynia Mabanglo, Valentines 2 and 3 are forthcoming.

These books were recently presented to the public last Apr. 20, as part of the UST Publishing House's "400 Books, 400 Books" project, to coincides with the 400th anniversary of UST as Asia's oldest university.

The books are available at the UST Publishing House bookstore on UST campus, Solidaridad Bookstore, Padre Faura, Ateneo, Manila; National Book Stores nationwide.

"CELEBRATIONS: A Culinary Feast from the Rosa-Rojas Table" from Anvil Publishing has over 100 heirloom family recipes which inspired the menu of Casa Rosa restaurant in Manila. Authors are Karla Prieto-Delgado, Gloria Reyes Mendiola, Cristina Rosa-Garcia, Elroy Rosa-de Guzman, Sylvia Rosa-Montilla and Vicky Prieto-Serrano. It is available at National Book Stores and Powerbooks.

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Maui Taylor stars in Cannes entry

FILIPINO actress Maui Taylor stars in Korean filmmaker Im Sang-Soo's "The Taste of Money"—a big production, Vina Big Icons Vic del Rosario to host the festivities (Maui is a Vina talent) and a Cannes host Main Competition entry next month. **Rayvel San Diego Jr.**

CHEER FACTOR

Vina Morales ready for love again

Actress stays mum on a new man in her life but talks about playing a stripper onstage

By Marinel R. Cruz and the Entertainment staff
Photos by Arnold Almacen

TWELVE years after she broke up with the father of her child, singer-actress Vina Morales is ready for love again.

Although she has remained friends with former partner Cedric Lee for the sake of their daughter Cessa, there's a new man in her life.

But Vina was tight-lipped about his identity during a recent visit to the Inquirer offices in Makati City. "I still have to figure out where this is headed," she said cautiously.

She volunteered that she had learned a lot from her three-month Cedric. "I used to push until I got what I wanted, [regardless] of the complications." Cedric was in the process of getting his marriage annulled when he and Vina met.) Now she is a little less controlling of the situation. "If God wants me to end up with this man, it will happen."

While on the subject of relationships, Vina said she was pleased that her sister, actress Shaina Magdayao, had reconciled with actor John Lloyd Cruz.

"Shaina had a hard time with all the controversies surrounding them," said Vina. "I see that they're really trying to work things out now. At 21, Shaina is more mature than I was at that age. She also has the family's full support."

During the hour-long chat, Vina discussed how excited she was about her latest project, the lead production of the musical "Rock of Ages." The stars Freddie Prinze Jr. reunion runs from June 15 to July 7 at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium of SOBC Plaza in Makati City.

Did you audition for "Rock of Ages?"

I had to. I've been working in this business for years, but musical theater never existed for me. I had only got an invitation from Atlantis once to audition for an earlier production. I chickened out of that one. Then came an e-mail invitation to audition for "Rock of Ages." This time I went.

I came prepared and sang two songs, one of which was "High Enough." I also read from the script for Drew Chart (Arnaquez/Rogal), who was there.

I am violent in my character; Sherrie—a small-town girl who comes to the city to pursue her dreams. Like her, I'm problematic. I'm from Iloilo, Cebu. I came to Manila because I wanted to be an actress and a singer. I know how Sherrie feels, how driven she is.

You'll be working closely with Nyoy Volante.

Yes, he plays the aspiring rocker Drew, who falls in love with Sherrie. I've worked with him on "SAF." We almost stand on the proverbial shores together. We haven't tackled the script yet, but we'll be rehearsing every day so we can work on our chemistry.

Do you have a love scene?

I know that I have a kissing scene. Sherrie is a stripper, so I'll have several nine dance numbers. I have work to do to get back in shape.

How about a sexy scene with Big Apessa?

That's a surprise for the audience. We're all excited to meet Big. He's already doing "Rock" in New York as Sherrie Jaxx, so he knows that by heart.

What took you so long to try theater?

I was scared. I didn't think I could do it. There's no take-two in theater. I have such high regard for theater performers.

Sabi ko nga [to shows without singing], I'm still wondering if I can survive that. But I'll be working with Jett Pangan, Calvin Millado, Nox Saguisag and Juby Limmayanan. I know I'll learn a lot from them and from Atlantis.

How are you preparing for the show?

(Vina flew to LA shortly after this interview to perform with Jirdi Santos, Sing Consunjeta and Jovit Baldivino in a mini-concert for The Filipino Show on.)

From LA, I'm taking a side trip to France, where "Rock" will be running for two nights.

What else would you like to do in theater?

I don't know . . . "Chicago" would be good, but I don't know if it's ever coming to Manila. I also like "Wicked," but for sure, I'm forward on "Rock of Ages."

Did the '90s talent show "That's Entertainment" prepare you for theater in any way?

It trained me in many ways. I've also worked with a lot of top choreographers and dance groups, like Galileo Fuguntin, the Boomerbeat, Douglas Nierras' Power Dance, and GS. They will tell you that when I train, I really learn.

How much time are you devoting to "Rock"?

Three months. I had to turn down several projects because of this. We will be rehearsing every day. I can't do a telenovela, or even work out of town. It's all worth it, though. With Big Apessa, my God! I've met him. He's very excited.

Will your daughter watch the show?

She can't; she's still a minor and I play a stripper.

How do you balance work and motherhood?

Two words: Time management. I've mastered it. Cessa is my priority, followed by my career, then the family business. Thank heavens for Face Time and Skype—I get to talk with Cessa even when I'm abroad.

Do you see her following in your footsteps?

She's into music like I was at her age. Her teachers once told me, "Vina, ang lupit ng mga anak mo." Cessa's music is very powerful. She would be a singer. I wouldn't stop her, just not now. I want her child[hood to be normal].

How do you handle intrigues?

You have to be made of steel not to get affected. I try as much as possible not to react or get hurt.

Do you have a Twitter account?

I do, @lovevinamorales, but someone handles it for me. I pass on to her what I want to tweet. She filters it for me. I use technology to my advantage.

With Twitter I'm able to promote my shows and projects, and reach out to my fans.

THE MAN? Is only focus of Vina Morales. She tells us, "If God wants me to end up with this man, it will happen."

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Alex Gonzaga doesn't mind being in the shadow of big sister Toni

By Allan Policarpio
Contributor

FOR ALEX Gonzaga, being in the shadow of her elder sister Toni isn't a big deal.

And she owns up alluding shrinity to something she simply laughs off. In fact, she TVL actress-host looks up to big sis as an inspiration to do better in the years to come.

"Siguradong ang sarap ng ganito. At isang marangal pa sabong pinagsikapan ni Ate[illegible], of course it's Toni," Alex told the Inquirer and other reporters during a recent set visit for "Think! Bisaya ang Tawag!"—TV5's newest Sunday afternoon game show, which also features basketball star Chris Tiu.

She added that the best thing about Toni is that she never fails to celebrate each and every all her achievements with her. "Lagi niyang sine-share sa 'kin 'yung mga tips niya sa mahahalagang event kapag may mga showing siya sa concert, etc."

Alex started her show biz career appearing in teen-oriented shows on ABS-CBN, before she moved to TV5. She considers Toni her best critic. She said that her older sister always gives her valuable advice on how she can improve her hosting and acting performances.

"I'm very thankful because despite how busy [Toni] may schedule, she still manages to watch [my shows], and gives me comments and praises," she said. "It helps me work on my weaknesses."

However, Alex doesn't want to be known as Toni's little sister for she was of her career. She wants to make a name for herself. When asked what her edge is over her sister, she said, laughing, "Siyempre mas bata kami ng [Toni]. Mas bagay ako sa bata pa."

Meanwhile, in terms of projects, Alex said that she's still in an experimental phase, where she tries and enjoys whatever comes her way. "Kung ano 'yung binibigay sa 'kin, 'yun 'yung ginagawa ko. Kung may inooffer sa 'kin, 'yung gusto ko rin. I'm also excited that she wants to do more TV series [with a Korean drama vibe."

"There are so many things I want to do. I'm also excited to do my first film with Vivo, where I have a four-movie contract," she said.

Apart from "Think," Alex also top bills the drama series "It. I Love You," and is in the shows "Scary Express," "Hey It's Saturday" and "Sabadabra It."

Talking to the 24-year old Kapuso star, it's obvious that she shares a very close relationship with her sister. What does she feel over the prospect of Toni getting married in her longtime boyfriend Paul Soriano?

"I don't want her to get married yet! I'm still enjoying all our bonding moments together—shopping in her room, cheering until five 5 a.m., watching movies and eating out."

Childhood dream

Aside from her career, Alex's other priority is graduating college this March at the University of Asia and the Pacific, where she's taking up humanities, specializing in Education. She said that teaching has always been her childhood dream.

"I was very talkative and would always pretend to be a teacher. I used to present chalk from one classroom, and buy class records and make my own lesson plans! I did everything when, but I enjoyed it very much," she said.

Juggling both show biz and school is never easy, but despite the hectic schedule, Alex never once thought of giving up her studies. She will always be grateful to TV5 for giving her leeway in her commitments. "After those hit, gusto ko talagang magtrabaho," she said.

"Think! Ikaw ang Tawag!" airs Sundays at 2:30 p.m.

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Cristine's vile comments on Ara's sex life fuel case

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

BLOOD is thicker than water, so they say, but in the case of half-sisters Ara Mina and Cristine Reyes, blood is boiling and the water has dried up. It's such bad taste and browse has come between them.

Cristine's manager-stylist-manager personal (the latter is like a libel and gives cuteness cues...) treated Ara on shrink on her, like reply: "It's such a funny issue that I see using Cristine."

It seemed unimaginable how angelic-looking Cristine could use such foul language in her tears in her tweet. But then again, looks can be deceiving. As sisters, isn't Ara's shame, Cristine's too?

This is not the first time they have waged war against each other. Their relationship has always been strained.

Ara made her name to show biz before Cristine came around. Ara has supported Cristine since the latter's struggling days in "Starstruck." Perhaps even back then, Cristine was already envious of how Ara's success and this led, fed-up resentment inside her threaten to reveal what she describes as Ara's tilted sex life!

It's no secret Cristine has let Gamboa get into her pants head. A young man who used to be close to her told me that she was surprised when Cristine refused to give me her new number. Apparently, more than Cristine's number has changed because of her newfound fame.

Certainly Ara is no saint herself, but stories about her blind heartedness are not unheard of in showbiz. Ara, however, she reasonably gave her long-time publicist a breakdown on.

Based on her text messages, Cristine has no respect at all for her Ate Ara. Neither as a sister nor as a human being, it seems the only effect of fame on Cristine is amnesia. Has she forgotten all the sacrifice that Ara has made for her all these years? I don't think Ara's keeping score. But it is basic human courtesy to give credit where credit is due. Even if Cristine doesn't appreciate Ara, the least she can do is to acknowledge Ara's role in her life especially when she was still nobody. Is that too much to ask or too much to give, Cristine?

Maybe Cristine should reexamine her near-death experience where she got smacked on their house during a typhoon. That should bring her back to her senses. Or does she need to send her a more concussive wake up call to make her realize that everything is fleeting, including fame?

BB GANDANGHARI

KRIS Aquino

Free spirit

When I saw BB Gandanghari at the birthday bash of Perez Hilton, our cool "Beauty" on TV 5, she immediately told me: "Tone her! I didn't think you would write down everything we talked about. Pati about the black guy. Sometimes we must put our values on pause."

I laughed it off because I didn't mention the black guy's name; so BB need not worry. I mean no harm. But being the free spirit that she is, I know BB gets my drift.

Missing

Kris Aquino is conspicuously missing in the fab business' feature 20 of ABS-CBN. It does not seem complete without her. According to Dyan Enrile, whom I fondly call "Chairman," Kris had already booked her schedule around the dates allotted for the shoot. Dyan solves future!

Matching rings

Patients of ABS-CBN's "Walang Hanggan" can now do a Daniel (Xian Martin) and Rainer (Julia Montes) number by wearing the same infinity ring that binds the lovers in the cop-caring telenovela. The eternal symbol of love a la Walang Hanggan is available in all branches of Tone World in Ilocandia in 14K yellow gold, 14K white gold, and all-over 925 to suit every budget. Check it out at http://www.facebook.com/infinity

PERSONAL: Madamo gid ko salamat to they be and my in Carmela de Bonsoy family be always pampering me more than I deserve, and also to the wonderful Orta family, especially Mark and Tes Gois of San Antonio Bulacan, for making me their adopted daughter!

For feedback, e-mail wenwenbgh@yahoo.com.

OPENS APRIL 25

ENTERTAINMENT Living Stars

Julie Bonnie C. Velarde
E-mail: entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Iza tries lechon Cebu

ACTRESS Iza Calzado, cover girl for Look mag's Body special, encouraging her food cousins. "I took charge of the contents of my ref. 'Do Tartillas,' she confessed. "I ate lechon again after eight long years."

Report Bar Diego Jr.

HEARD

Country girl at heart

When the going gets tough in Show Town, Louise de los Reyes escapes to the family home in the province

HOME BODY

MOM GOT most of the pieces from Binondo, like the chandelier in the living room.

By Reyes San Diego Jr.
Photos by Andrew Tarayao

TANZA, CAVITE—Louise de los Reyes, GMA 7 teen star, is used to the long commute from the network's studio in Quezon City to her family's house in this Southern Luzon province.

She takes the scenic route along Coastal Road and Cavitex (Manila-Cavite Expressway) whenever she drives home. "The view along Cavitex is beautiful at dawn and at dusk," she explained. "You see the sun rising from, and dropping into Manila Bay." It has also cut her travel time by half, she said, freeing her to do other things.

Blogging on social networks

She updates her Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr accounts constantly, and posts lots of photos on her Tumblr page. Her blogs as well. "I once wrote about being broken-hearted," she said.

Before Iza got the wrong idea that she may be quarreling with rumored beau Enzo Pineda, for example), she clarified the issue for us. "I was inspired by the Jason Mraz song 'I Won't Give Up.' It made me wonder what it felt to be broken-hearted, so I wrote down my thoughts on the subject," she related.

FAMAS Youth Achievement trophy

She tackles less controversial topics, too. "When I come across good restaurants or shops, I write about them," she said. "I give fashion and shopping tips as well."

The blogger likes playing online games as it gives her the opportunity to bond with her two brothers. "Our house looks like an Internet café on weekends: My brothers and I all are around the living room with our laptops!" she said. She added that they were hooked on online games, role-playing games like Marvel Alliance.

"Sometimes we play all night—until 6 a.m.," she continued. "We sleep for a few hours and start playing again. Most of the people we play with are abroad, so time zones are different."

Whenever she's free, she plays with her four young godmagkids. Ever the child, Louise hickeys, endlessly with her nephews and nieces—much to her mom's dismay.

At home, Louise holes up in her pink bedroom—catching up on her sleep, reading books (like "The Little Prince" and the "Twilight" series), or surfing the Net.

Her mother recounted that Louise herself chose the color pink for her bedroom when she was Grade 2.

The room is girlish and filled with stuffed toys—presents from friends and fans. Enzo's gifts... particularly souvenir items from a recent trip to Baler—occupy a special place on her dresser.

LOUISE plays the keyboard in the trophy room.

"I've always wanted to visit Ilocos," she said wistfully. "I imagine it to be so romantic."

The self-confessed homebody said that she would love to travel more in the future.

Understandably, her work (in three flgicom shows "Hip Hotkong," "Temp Pilipinas" and "Forces Ekonis") prevents her from joining rotary Ethan Ramos, Derrick Monasterio, Lexi Fernandez and Mikee Quintos, who will attend the premiere of Kim Jaeminas' "The Road" in Los Angeles next month.

Work and school

On top of her show biz commitments, she's also in her last year in university—majoring in Foreign Service—at the Lyceum of the Philippines in General Trias, Cavite.

While taping the daily afternoon soap "Akinkatwa," it was not uncommon for her to wrap up work at 6 a.m. and head straight to school for her 7 a.m. class.

Exhausted from her shoot, Louise, who prefers sitting at the front of the class, would often doze off.

"Luckily, my teachers were considerate. I had a full load when I was given Makalera."

But I couldn't pass up on the show since it was my biggest break. I also didn't want to drop my subjects because it would look bad on my transcript," she noted.

With a lot of blood, sweat and tears, she survived that grueling semester. Now she is enrolled in Lyceum's home-study program. She is clearly an overachiever and dreams of becoming a lawyer.

"I want to take up law in UP Diliman," she said.

Her mom said that she has always treated Louise to value education and to balance well her academics and her extracurricular activities.

On the ground floor is an entire room devoted to Louise's various achievements in school and to show biz. It is the TV room, and it doubles as a trophy room. Showcased in

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the event are various outlets and creators from exclusive pageants—from campus to modeling competitions.

Among her many titles are Miss Southern Luzon, Miss Jag Jeans, Miss Pink Waters, Miss Pinoygame Extreme, Miss Teen Philippines, and Miss Teen SuperWorld.

Her Bicol Youth Achievement award looms highest as well.

Louise made her big screen debut in Pacoe Gallaga's indie film "Kapuso and Mosky" and is determined to know her craft in show biz.

Three days, she is reunited with "Kokoloo" partner Akiko Kathayama in the ... prime-time soap "My Beloved."

"Akiko hasn't changed at all," she said. "We're accompatible. We understand in this business or the same time. We know our limits and use. That's why we work well together."

Her sister is off with Dreamscape Digital, who is directing "My Beloved."

"It's my first time to work with him, and he's really cool," she said. "Actually, the entire team is easy to work with. Long into the night and even early morning, the mood on the set was light, and think because will energetic, encouraging us to give our all!"

Louise is always on the go and has devised a few smart storage ideas at home. For example, Louise decided to store her extensive shoe collection on the ground floor.

"It saves time," Louise said. "Whenever I need a particular pair of shoes for a show or a taping, I don't have to go up to my bedroom and look for them. They're all on the ground floor and can be picked up and loaded in the car quickly!"

Her entire pairs are the assumptions/boots and pumps.)

Such time-saving tips are important, considering her hectic schedule.

She's busy, so Louise lately that she once hosted from seven/assistants 20/so has firmly denied being pregnant.)

Far from city stress

Since the incident, Louise has learned to take it easy and spend more time with her family in Cavite

SHOE collection is neatly arranged on the ground floor.

PRIZES souvenir from Dubai

—especially during these sweltering summer months.

Home is her sanctuary, she said, so when the going gets tough in Showbiz Town, she escapes to her home in Cavite—away home in Tanza.

"We've lived in Cavite the last 10 years, since I was in the elementary," recalled Louise, who is Mary Grace Pedro in real life.

She prefers the laid-back pace of the province to the maddening rat race of the city.

"She is preferences," she assured. "I love the peace and quiet here. Manila is so stressful. The traffic is awful."

She didn't even consider moving into a condo near the studio.

"I would rather stay home. It can be lonely living on your own. Here I can watch my parents grow up."

She's a little bit of country and a whole lot of city hotshot. Like a true-blue Cavitelie, she admitted that she would be feisty. "I'm not the type to pick a fight, but I will not let anyone step all over me."

Louise has also learned to cook, mainly recipes from her mom. "Sinigang dishes like sinigang and cordovara."

She also bought a soda maker recently—to whip up home-made refreshments when it gets too hot outside.

She has all the makings of a homemaker, and domestic goddess, but she insisted that getting married is the farthest thing from her mind right now.

At time, listening closely? Mom is a constant visitor in the Davila home. (he doesn't seem to mind (he long about how Everett City vs Cavite...a plus point he may have over other suitors.)

Louise still has many items on her wish list. Apart from earning a law degree, she also hopes to build her own house someday.

She recently promised one that the family mansion didn't necessarily reflect her taste in interiors. (The chandeliers and other bits of décor were chosen by her mom, who bought them in Brussels, she said.)

She once saw a photo of a house in Europe and wanted to use it for (Pinoy. "I got it from Tumblr," she said. "It's my dream house. The concept is shabby chic."

It looks deceptively simple, she said. "But I would add a finishing touches. If we ever renovate the house, I'd like it to be all white, with lots of color from wall throw pillows and other accessories."

She also doesn't want her conduct ... to be too shattered. "I want it to look refreshing and relaxing," she said.

Perfect for this scorching summer season.

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2) BATTLESHIP in 2D
9:15am, 12:15pm, 3:15pm, 6:15pm, 9:15pm, 12:30mn

3) BATTLESHIP
6:15pm, 9:00pm, 11:45pm

4) 21 Jump Street
9:45am, 12:00pm, 1:30pm, 4:30pm, 6:30pm

5) THE LUCKY ONE
9:15am, 11:30am, 2:15pm, 4:30pm, 7:15pm, 10:15pm, 12:30mn

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9:30am - 12:00pm
2:30pm - 4:00pm
7:00pm - 10:00pm

3) Battleship in 2D
9:25am - 12:05pm

4) The Lucky One
10:55am - 1:15pm
3:40pm - 6:01pm
9:30pm

5) Titanic in 3D
10:00am - 6:30pm
10:00pm

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THE LUCKY ONE / BATTLESHIP - PG13
1:00, 3:30, 8:15, 10:15

21 JUMP STREET - R13
12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 7:00, 10:10

BATTLESHIP - PG13
1:30, 4:15, 8:00, 9:30

THE LUCKY ONE - PG13
12:30, 2:55, 5:30, 7:45, 10:15

BATTLESHIP IN 2D / TITANIC | IN 3D | BOTH - PG13
2:15, 5:00, 7:30

THE LUCKY ONE IN 2D - PG13
1:45, 4:00, 6:30, 8:55

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Brad and Angelina do right by their kids

VIEWFINDER
Nestor U. Torre

After years of worldwide speculation, the celebrated couple decide to tie the knot

SEVEN YEARS after playing the title roles in "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie surprised the world with the announcement of their engagement. Pitt said Jolie fell in love while filming "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" and became a pair when the shooting ended.

Since then this sensational affair has not stopped being front-page news. Therefore, some observers may wonder what the fuss is all about. After all, they've been a public couple for so long, and have three adopted and three natural children. What's the big deal?

Well, First, Pitt and Jolie have always maintained that they would marry only when gay couples everywhere in the US were allowed to marry.

Second, in the couple's kids, their parents' marriage is a very big deal. The celebrity couple has said that their kids were understood to mean viewing them as "do the right thing" and kept Jolie Birth-, and Jolie in the eyes of the world—but more importantly, in their own estimation. Bless us to "Evangeline" for subverting their own "free spirits" for the sake of their children's happiness.

To stands the special occasion, Pitt gifted his beloved with a stunning 10-carat diamond ring that he himself designed.

Aside from Evangeline and their children, this impending marriage could make many other offspring of unmarried couples happy, if it launches a trend for live-in partners finally to legitimize their union.

In local show biz, for instance, there are quite a number of couples who proclaim that "marriage is just a piece of paper" and swear that they're bringing up their love children in the best possible way. But have they ever asked their kids for their thoughts on the subject? The outcome of such a belated discussion may surprise them—perhaps enough for them to arrive at their own moment of truth, and find and legalize have done.

Other inspirational stars

Celebrities have been showing the way for the rest of us in other instances as well. George Clooney, Leonardo DiCaprio and Oprah Winfrey are only a few of the stars who have spent millions of dollars to help the disadvantaged, or have come to the rescue of the planet's besieged environment.

Even when they simply do their work well, they set inspiring touchstones of excellence that make life more bearable and meaningful. Despite, at times, failing in their own lives, they continue to inspire when they pick themselves up and resume the struggle against their inner demons.

A sterling case in point is Robert Downey Jr., who, after repeated busts with cocaine and several failed attempts at rehabilitation, turned his career around, and now enjoys a spring in his stellar trajectory—as an A-List luminary.

Britney Spears also comes to mind—and we hope that sooner or later, the list will include Lindsay Lohan, who struggles and fails at sex, but who is too good a talent for us to give up on permanently.

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OPENS APRIL 25

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

Xian Lim speaks on stardom and Kim Chiu

Heartthrob shrugs off negative comments about his talent

By Marinel R. Cruz

XIAN Lim and Kim Chiu

ACTOR Xian Lim laughed off the comments that he merely rode on the wave of popularity of his "My Housemate Doll" costar Kim Chiu and now handles it well.

"It's unfortunate that some people feel that way. I tell you that everything has changed for me since I did the telenovela, but I really worked hard for it. I'm thankful for Kim's suggestions, but I think they were there for me, too. A fun group called BiniBi was even formed because of our tandem," said the 22-year-old actor.

Xian has signed up for at least seven product endorsements since he appeared on "My Binondo Girl." The latest is Globe's Inspire Facebook (FB) package, exclusively for its prepaid subscribers.

In the now-defunct top-rated show on ABS-CBN, Xian portrayed the role of Andy Wu, a Chinese businessman who marries Kim's character, Jade Hemandez, to help her reclaim the money her father took away. The two eventually fall in love.

"Kim and I are happy that we were able to inspire a lot of people with our work. They said they could relate to our characters," Xian told movie fans during a gathering hosted by Globe. The actor however, denied he had a romantic relationship with Kim while working on the series.

His first major acting role was in the TV adaptation of the film "Katas ng Kahirapan," in 2009. The following year, he appeared in the drama series "Bella."

"In Gin, I enjoy what I'm doing. In fact, the best thing about show biz is that you get to do different things every day, express yourself in so many different ways," Xian said. "The downside is that you hardly get enough sleep, but this is manageable especially if you enjoy the company of the people you work with."

Xian also said he didn't mind the lost privacy he experiences as an actor. "I make people happy. I never people refuse genuinely want to shake my hand —it's all worth it for me."

Using social network

Xian said he considered social networking sites important for advancing his career. "They play a big factor, and not just in promotions. Through Facebook and Twitter, I also get to communicate with the fans. It's my way of bonding with them, especially when I can't be with them physically," he explained. "Their comments help me improve as an actor. The downside is that there are posers. I have no problem with their posting my pictures on their accounts, but it's rarely that some of them actually pretend to be me."

Xian said he considered himself lucky that he hasn't experienced any cyber bullies, unlike some of his colleagues in the biz. "I haven't experienced it personally. But it's easy to block those people. The consumers [get deal mostly with] my utmost performances. I try to read them all, and if I have time, I reply. It's the least I can do to thank my fans."

Xian recently appeared in the romantic comedy movie "My Cactus Heart," by director Enrico Santos. He will star in a youth-oriented film by Frasco Mortiz, entitled "The Reunion," with Bamboo Jim, Enrique Gil and Kean Cipriano.

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Libre Chelo Bunal-Formoso

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My Dream Interview contest deadline April 27

Win NOKIA mobile phones and a chance to travel to Madrid, Spain! Only teams may join. Each team of four students 11-16 years old must have a teacher coach, choose a prominent person as interview subject and write questions for their dream interviewee. Reminder: We only want questions. Each team must submit 15 interview questions only. No need to do the actual interview yet. E-mail entries to mydreaminterview@inquirer.com.ph or send to PDI, 1000 Chino Roces Ave., 1204 Makati City, by midnight of April 27. For contest mechanics and all required forms, log on to www.inquirer.com.ph

ART OF THE INTERVIEW WORKSHOPS

A question of trees in Baguio

Text by Tonette Orejas
Photos by EV Espiritu
Inquirer Central Luzon

GOOD QUESTION A student takes the mic [above] and gets her own guest Alcuaraz's answer [right]. Seated is the PDI banner's the author.

BAGUIO CITY—"Are you mad at Henry Sy?"

A student threw this very candid question at artist Karla Marbo Alcuaraz, whose efforts and those of his colleagues contributed a local count to extend the temporary environmental protection order (Tepo) that stopped the earth-balling or transfer of 162 trees on a land swath by SM City Baguio.

The query of Mediatrix Parmenti Jr., 14, had Alcuaraz quickly assessing the meaning of his route. The 30-year-old theater artist and director said, "Personally, I'm not angry at him."

"They say if Mr. Sy [founder and head of the SM group of companies] were still in control [of the SM group], he would have stopped the tree-felling. He grew up poor. His children grew up in luxury," Alcuaraz said.

Parmenti's question was just one of 22 thrown at Alcuaraz, who graciously agreed to be on the hot seat of the Baguio City leg of the Art of the Interview workshop conducted by Inquirer Education (IE) with the help of the newspaper's marketing section.

The workshop aimed to prepare students for the Inquirer's My Dream Interview (MDI) contest. Five finalist teams will be chosen, two of which will represent the country in the World Association of Newspapers (Wan-Ifra) global competition for a chance to visit a trip to Madrid, Spain.

Held at the University of the Philippines Baguio, the workshop was attended by a total of 60 participants from the cities of Baguio and Dagupan and the provinces of Nueva Ecija, La Union, Bataan and Quezon.

The actual interview with Alcuaraz also allowed participants to practice what they learned from Inquirer contributing editor Linda Bolilo on preparing for the interview and from this correspondent on what to do during the actual interview.

Mundito and recommending, Alcuaraz helped the students get a real feel of being interviewers.

"I'm impressed by your questions," he told them, adding the kids had more substantial questions than some professional media people.

The students took to the microphone with confidence, peppering the interviewee with questions like why he became an artist, what was art, why he did not like to be called an environmentalist or tree defender, and what it was like being a father to five children, aged 9 to 19.

One of them managed to get him to admit that he was pretty much home-schooled by his mother, theater actress Gigi Dueñas de Bompat.

Some of Alcuaraz's answers left his students in awe.

"Loving trees is part and parcel of being a resident of Baguio. Some is not just our homes. The community is also ours," he said.

"Environmental activists struggle to not just attend. They lose. The issue is reviewed a lot of times—how government wants to back on trees. It's seen in what is happening to the Irisan dump, Camp John Hay pollution, beggars and squatters," Alcuaraz said in reply to another question.

After the interview, Inquirer Learning previous editor Chelo Bunal-Formoso gave students a heap of tips on how to write their stories based on their dream interviews.

The MDI contest is sponsored by IE and Nokia, in cooperation with Maynilad, Inquirer.net, Radyo Inquirer and PAN Rita. The global My Dream Interview Project is supported by Fundación Arándor of Argentina and The Interview People.

Good reasons to attend autism conference

By Chelo Bunal-Formoso

HAVING shared a lot about parenting a child with autism in previous columns, I now don't feel a need to preface this piece with a review of my son's condition.

When you write every now and then about your son with autism, people you meet start talking to you as if they know him. "How's Gabriel?" they ask. I don't mind the familiarity. I consider it a bonus for writing for the top breadwinners in this country.

So let me cut to the chase.

If you are a parent, teacher, therapist, nurse or doctor to a person with autism—no matter what age—try to attend the Autism Society of the Philippines' (ASP) conference on April 26-28 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Temple Grandin, Ph.D. and Stephen

Law, advocacy and kids in Cebu

By Linda B. Bolilo

CEBU CITY—There is no crash in the "nature" that today's kids do not know current issues, do not comprehend what they read and do not listen.

At least so far as the almost 30 participants in The Art of the Interview workshop in Cebu City were concerned, they did all those things, giving lawyer Gloria E. Ramos a challenging but fun interaction.

An advocate for human, women's and children's rights as well as environmental protection, Ramos very generously agreed to allow the kids to practice their newly learned interview skills.

She was pleasantly surprised at the breadth and depth of the students' curiosity as they threw questions at her, ranging from her choice of career path to the quality of Philippine environmental laws.

The kids, mostly from private schools in Cebu, participated in the third of the Inquirer in Education (IE) series of workshops on conducting interviews to help them prepare for the global My Dream Interview (MDI) competition that will give them the chance to win a trip to Madrid, Spain.

The workshops, conducted earlier at the Inquirer head office in Makati City and the Convergys of the Philippines

INQUIRER Visayas Bureau chief Connie Fernandez discusses what to do during an interview

Baguio campus, discussed how to prepare for and conduct actual interview, as well as what to do after the interview.

They also applied the basis of the requirements and other details relating to the MDI contest organized by the World Association of Newspapers and News (Wan-Ifra).

With only a few minutes to prepare for their face-to-face encounter with Ramos, a columnist of the Inquirer sister publication Cebu Daily News, it was obvious from the questions asked that the students had very carefully the short background information on the interviewee handed out to them. One of the first questions they put to Ramos was why she decided to shift from being a corporate lawyer to environment advocate. Ramos replied she was inspired by pioneering Filipino environmentalist Lorayes Antonio Oposa, a Ramon Magsaysay Award winner, to take up the cause.

That they were listening was apparent when the lawyer, after talking about the Philippines' world-class environmental legislation, was asked if there was any law she would want to see changed or expanded. To the very insightful question, Ramos said they had been working to amend the law creating the Department of Environment and Natural Resources because it gives the government agency "inconsistent roles—protecting the environment and exploring the country's natural resources" in a source of revenue for the government.

Ramos said environmentalists wanted the Philippines to have something similar to the United States' Environmental Protection Agency (EPC), an independent and powerful

LAWYER Gloria E. Ramos says the country's biodiversity is among the best in the world.

Playgrounds for the MIND

Editor Chayrie Medina

CEU Business Administration program given Level IV accreditation

THE CENTRO Escolar University Business Administration program was recently granted with Level IV accreditation status, the most prestigious recognition for quality in higher education. The award was conferred by the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) and received by the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP). The recognition is a testament to the school's excellence performance in the following areas: excellent teaching and learning; outcomes of the business administration program; research productivity; community service of the institution and the programs; linkages of the institution quality assurance mechanisms of the programs; and career planning and development.

CLSU turns 185; holds recognition program

A RECORD 691 people for service awardees, retirees and outstanding employees highlighted the celebration of the 100th founding anniversary of Central Luzon State University in the Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija last April 12. A total of 691 service awardees (57 non-academic staff and 26 faculty) who have served the university for 20, 25, 30, 35 or 40 years or more, outstanding 10 retirees were given each a plaque of recognition and a service pin. The university also organized the outstanding faculty and staff members under the CLSU-Program Awards and to members for Service Excellence (PMES2). They were Antonio E. Brawn, outstanding administrative staff; Lenel T. Ilanila Delfin, outstanding research, extension, training and production staff; Associate Prof. Dionisia Povina Isaac, outstanding faculty - Level 2; Prof. Emmanuel M. Velasco, outstanding faculty - Level 3; and Dr. Teresita B. Abella, outstanding official. Also recognized as outstanding group was the CLSU-IRSU-CVARMI-NFSH Research Team headed by Dr. Ira L. Pantonicela, team leader.

LPU maintains ISO 9001:2008 certification

LYCEUM of the Philippines University-LPU retained its certification under the ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System standard for the third straight year. The Manila, Makati and Cavite campuses of the LPU system were recently audited by the Societe Generale de Surveillance (SGS). The auditors of SGS pointed out that the University showed no major or minor non-conformities to the quality management system policies. The positive findings of the two-day audit of the three campuses further stressed the commitment of the University to Academic Excellence through Quality Management Systems.

FEU Manila and FEU East Asia College conduct Options 2012

LAST APRIL 20 12, the FEU Group's university-wide job fair, was held Feb. 9 to 10 at the Mini Auditorium of FEU's Technology Building. True to its theme, "Industry Ready," the fair was designed to allow FEU graduates to take on the challenges of industry through various seminars, employment tests and interviews conducted by different companies in a range of industries. Accenture, Comm-at Ayala, Chinabank, Excelsior Banking Corp., Emerson, IBM, JP Morgan Chase, and SP Fine Solutions were sponsors and among the 134 top companies that participated in the three-day event. A total of 1,700 graduating students and alumni from FEU Manila, FEU East Asia College and FEU Diliman attended the event in the hope of landing a job right after graduation.

Alba honored with PWU heritage award

DOMINI NICANDRO speaker Dr. Manuel Alba, former assembly man and budget minister, was conferred the Conrado Benitez Heritage Award by president Francisco G. Benitez and board chairperson Helena Z. Benitez of the Philippine Women's University during its 69th graduation rites held at the Philippine International Convention Center, Roxas City. Alba served for 21 years in the Arts Board.

UM inaugurates new building

SPRINGTIME IT of Mindanao inaugurated its newest facility, the Business and Engineering Building, at its 26-hectare Marina Campus last March 23. The new four-storey building has a total floor area of 11,500 square meters and will house the university's Engineering Laboratory on the ground floor, the College of Accounting Education on the third floor and the main university library on the fourth floor. The new building also has more than 100 rooms for classrooms, laboratories and support services. UM president Dr. Guillermo P. Torres Jr. and wife Elizabeth Dizon-Torres, together with the UM Board of Trustees, took part in the ribbon cutting ceremonies.

Angelicum stages fashion runway

ANGELICUM College recently kicked-off its 40th anniversary by staging the Angelicum Fashion Runway at the SM North Edsa featuring several batches. Showcasing fashion collections from rising designers Ebing Luis and Jot Luis, the moment captured through the runway. Celebrities namely Wanek Garcia, Francheska Salcedo, Zyjian Jaworski, Jairus Pascal Aquino, and Jolen Izzy Castillo, students of Angelicum's Home study program, participated in the show.

HONOR ROLL

Lycean wins TESDA skills competition

LYCEUM OF the Philippines University-Batangas' International Travel and Tourism Management student Ivan Mitchell C. Bonsol is tagged the National Championship - Restaurant Service in the 2012 Philippine National Skills Competition (PNSC) held March 26 to 29. TESDA nominated the said competition. He bested six other contenders through the direction of his coach, Leonisa F. Ballon Jr. Bonsol will represent the Philippines in the 9th ASEAN Skills Competition (Restaurant Service) to be held in Jakarta, Indonesia on November 29-12.

UB Law ranked 14th in Nov 2011 bar

UNIVERSITY of Batangas College of Law produced 11 new lawyers in the November 2011 bar examination, with results released February 29. They are lawyers Danica A. Bautista (Sariaya), Reynold S. Beredo, Jenny A. De Castro, Heidi Lois M. De Leon, Alfredo D. De Torres-Macasaca, Maria Ana S. Dimacuha, Reyner M. Garcia, Robert Gerald B. Garcia, Ian John A. Manalili, Philbert A. Olalino and Roberto Inigo D. Sanchez. UB member surpassing percentage of 27.83 percent against the national passing of 31.96 percent, placing the institution at rank 14 out of 114 law schools nationwide. Among its six alumnus of UB High School, Dr. Hernando B. Perez, university president, says is that the College of Law, since its re-opening in 1987, has produced a total of 138 lawyers, three of whom have been appointed presiding judges.

Southville alumnus makes it to Tribeca

A SHORT film by Miguel Calayan, graduate of Southville International School and Colleges (SISC) high school batch 2008, was chosen as one of entries to be shown in the prestigious Tribeca Film Festival in New York. DAY 213 (MOJAK) - released in most all over the world, Calayan's Prima will be premiered along with 83 other entries which made it to the cut. He wrote, directed and did the cinematography for the said film. Prima will have screenings on April 19, 20, and 24. For more details, log on to www.primadocfilm.com.

SPORTS & CAMPUS BRIEFS

Letran ready for NCAA 88

COACH'O de San Juan de Letran expressed readiness for the several meetings of the 88th season of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the country's oldest multi-sporting competition, in a formal turnover ceremony yesterday. Letran rector and president Rev. Fr. Tamerlane R. Lanca O.P. received the NCAA flag from Dr. Anthony Tamayo of the outgoing NCAA host University of Perpetual Help DALTA System. Letran last hosted the NCAA in 2002.

CLIP-BulSU offers summer programs

CENTER for Learning and Innovation for Professionals (CLIP) of Bulacan State University (BulSU) in Malolos City is offering five summer programs. They programs are Practical Electronics, Basic Repair for Small Appliances and Basic Heating, Ventilating, Food and Beverage, and Commercial Cooking. For further inquiries regarding these programs offerings, please call: (044) 791-1717, or e-mail clipbsu@yahoo.com/clipbsu_gerald@yahoo.com.

Perpetual holds alumni homecoming

UNIVERSITY of Perpetual Help System DALTA, the newly Perpetual Help College of Pasay will hold its grand alumni homecoming (Pinoy Pa Rin!) on April 28, 6 p.m. at the Ernesto Palanca Gymnasium Hall. UPH-SD Las Piñas Campus. The Pinpo family will experience another truly unforgettable interaction. Include are from 5 to 7 p.m. with three bands featuring songs from the 80s. The university admin initiative will honor board topnotchers and will give milestones for alumni achievers through the years. Registration fee is P500. Please contact Liel Quinones, alumni coordinator at (0908) 340-0866 or 871-0828 local 105.

Summer short courses at CCP

CENTRAL College of the Philippines is offering a wide range of summer short courses during the school break, ranging from English improvement classes to culinary courses and karate lessons. For more information on the other summer offerings, contact the CCP Admissions Office at (0918) 960-5883, or call 713-0170 loc. 184 or 713-0842; e-mail info@ccp.edu.ph.

UST confers award on Inquirer

UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas rector Rev. Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa, O.P. conferred the Quadricentennial Service Award to the Philippine Daily Inquirer, represented by Corporate Affairs manager Connie Rabajalan, for being UST's indispensable partner in reaching out and communicating to the university's various stakeholders during UST's Quadricentennial anniversary celebration.

Colegio de San Lorenzo gets KBP-PACE accreditation

KAPISANAN ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) and the Philippine Association of Communicators in Education (PACE) granted accreditation to Colegio de San Lorenzo (CSL-QC)'s Communication Arts Department.

The college is now empowered to monitor radio and television stations' compliance with the standards of responsible broadcasting as established in the KBP Broadcast Code. The recognition was awarded during the KBP-PACE Accreditation Training workshop last December 2011 at the Philippine Information Agency Auditorium in Quezon City.

In accreditation with St. Joseph College Quezon City starting this school year, Ilaiza will offer Master of Arts in Education (MMEd) programs, majors in Educational Management, Guidance and Counseling, and Special Education.

UE sets 64th year-end graduation rites, conferment of honorary degree

UNIVERSITY of the East marks two important occasions on April 25 highlighting the honorary degree conferment rites and the 64th first-end Commencement Exercises for UE Manila at 8 a.m., and the Arlec-64th Commencement Exercises for UE Manila and Caloocan campuses at 2 p.m.

Those major UE events will be held at the Plenary Hall, Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), CCP Complex, Pasay City.

In the morning order of ceremonies is the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Humanities upon a UE distinguished alumnus Dr. Howard Q. Dee, 29th distinguished honoree.

Dee graduated from UE in 1951 with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. He also pursued in UE a Master of Arts in Economics.

Member Schools

Biotech comes alive

SCIENCE is usually understood and appreciated better when traditional lectures are supplemented with interactive activities.

The Third National Biotechnology Conference for Teachers was held recently at the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority building in Quezon City.

It was organized by the Department of Agriculture's Biotechnology Programme Implementation Unit, the University of the Philippines Diliman National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (NIMBB) and the Philippine Teachers Recognizing the Importance of Biotechnology Education.

A total of 500 college and high school teachers and 60 students attended the conference.

Cynthia T. Hedreyda, NIMBB director and conference chair, said it was the opportune time to expose aspiring researchers to the concepts, especially in the field of personalized medicine, due to the decreasing costs and increasing power of gene sequencing.

Rosario Bautista, head of the Philippine National Collection of Microorganisms, urged high school students to use in their classes the institute's national culture.

Plays

For the One Act Play competition, entries were written, directed and produced by students themselves. NIMBB's Jay Lazaro and Normando Ignacio, and Helen Calingacion of the UP College of Arts and Letters were judges. Cash prizes and school

Queenie V. Lee-Chua

NIMBB's Ned Bautista reported on the online game Fold it, a protein folding activity that showed that human judgment and instinct could match, if not exceed, the ability of computer algorithms to predict the three-dimensional structures of proteins from their amino acid sequences.

Some players even published their game results in scholarly journals.

Hedreyda highlighted other good stories. The Philippines was steadily gaining experience in the genomics, especially in the field of personalized medicine, due to the decreasing costs and increasing power of gene sequencing.

Rosario Bautista, head of the Philippine National Collection of Microorganisms, urged high school students to use in their classes the institute's national culture.

STUDENTS at Magsaysay Lapu-Nationalist High School received the Best Play award in the National Biotechnology Conference.

Plays

For the One Act Play competition, entries were written, directed and produced by students themselves. NIMBB's Jay Lazaro and Normando Ignacio, and Helen Calingacion of the UP College of Arts and Letters were judges. Cash prizes and school

GOLDEN JUBILEE HOMECOMING: High School Class of 1961 of Holy Infant Academy gathered recently for a night of fellowship at Calaguas Bay Hotel Resort in Calaguas City. Oriental Mindoro. Guest of honor was Calaguas Mayor Boy C. Lauriano. Vice Mayor Jojo Perez also attended the event.

School offers culinary degree course

ASPIRING young chefs now have the opportunity to fulfill their dreams to earn a college diploma and qualify for jobs as executive chefs.

The Center for Culinary Arts (CCA Manila) will offer its first two-year baccalaureate program, Bachelor of Science in Culinary Management, starting June.

The four-year program is one of the few degree courses that cover specifically to the food service industry.

Aside from general education subjects, the program integrates elements from CCA's two-year diploma courses in culinary arts and baking and pastry arts, with emphasis on practical learning.

CCA Manila is the first culinary school in the country to have its programs accredited by the American Culinary Federation (ACF), a prestigious organization of chefs based in the United States.

The new degree program will be benchmark with national and international standards, merging the ACF accredited diploma courses in culinary and baking and pastry arts with prescribed general education classes.

The BSCM degree program has been approved and accredited by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

CCA managing director Ms. Verina F. Lerma said the baccalaureate program would offer electives designed to make it one-of-a-kind while keeping it par with international standards.

Graduates of the program can become chefs or restaurant owners. They can also venture into other food related professions, like food photography, food writing, culinary curriculum and design and other allied careers.

Lerma said CCA Manila's BSCM would accept students from all backgrounds, whether or not they had prior formal college or culinary arts provided they passed the Student Discovery Course.

Recent high school graduates and those wanting to change careers may apply. Those who have finished culinary courses in other schools may also apply. They have, however, to pass a required validation examination to help CCA assess if they meet the requirements.

A STUDENT puts the finishing touches on a pastry.

Call 8942830 or 8942840, e-mail admissions@cca-manila.com or visit www.cca-manila.com.

Kids show off biz skills

From page G4

stand, some to be sports, some to be interested in future businesses."

Asked how she would spend the money she said, "Bree," revealing that despite the entrepreneurial spirit she was still just a kid.

But she added, "I want to be an entrepreneur. I want Asian supermarts to grow! I want it to be a business already."

Award winners

Awards were given out at the close of the bazaar. The "Most Original Concept" award was given to the booth Anime Manor. Runner-up went to Bandoo Tribe.

The "Highest Sales" award went to Kingsquay of the Young siblings.

Minister Hugo B. Dalumpines IV, Mayors Tamayo grabbed the "Best Booth Design" award, while Avagatto and the Medalle's Easy Money Lenders Company won the "Best Service" award.

Each winner received a trophy.

According to Ortiz, Kiddo-preneur would help the children in choosing someone to mentor for every project per case because "Still they were not into marketing? As early as now, they already have an idea of what they might want in pursue when they grow up," she added.

Kids who joined the bazaar earned from P100,000 to P400,000. However, Dona said some had to much money, they did not earn a lot. But, considering the bazaar did not aim to make a profit, she said it was no big deal.

"What's important are the learnings," Ortiz said.

Good reasons to attend autism conference

From page G3

Shore have agreed to donate its resources with discussion at the conference. These two professionals are themselves living autism spectrum, so are well beat firsthand about their challenges and how they have coped with the same.

Grandin's book, "Emergence: Labelled Autistic," answered a lot of questions I had after my son's diagnosis. Among the things I remember reading are the effect they have on biggest because she could not stand the smell of people (she has a heightened sense of smell), which my son also has; she is treated a hugging machine that she used whenever she felt the need for a hug; her college career revolutionized the livestock industry.

Whatever defines the autism condition herself or her, Grandin has more than made up for with the intellectual processes that have brought her a Ph.D. and a living as a professor of Animal Science at the Colorado State University.

I liked it that when Claire Danes won an acting award for playing the title role in the HBO movie "Temple Grandin," the real female was shown in the audience wearing her signature cowgirl attire.

Shore, for his part, had to contend with a nonverbal early childhood and difficulties that prompted psychoeducational tests in his parents to have him institutionalized.

To his luck, his parents refused and, as it turned out, he is a professor in Adelphi University. He is also a consultant on issues relating to accommodations, relationships and employment for adults with autism.

Grandin and Shore are among the reasons I'm attending the MIF conference. I wish all parents of children with disability could go.

Whenever I'm at a conference, I can tell the parents of the newly diagnosed children. They sit quietly, eyes glistening from the tears that they keep from hogging themselves. I was like them the very first time I attended a conference. I sat there with shards of fear in my heart.

I took away a lot from that first conference, so much so that the following year, I brought my husband with me. I took down recording notes, including pearls of wisdom dished out by several speakers. Here are some of those pearls:

Whatever you do, don't blame yourself for your child's disorder. Blame is counterproductive.

Autism volunteers also turned teams on the spot to act out a script on Sesame Street. Part of the Symposium of Adamson University and Marie Meridian, Christian Gerbe, and Jordan Abad of the University of Santo Tomas, won first prize (P2,000), while students from Carder Hanz University and Las Piñas Science High School were runner-ups (P500 per team).

Sponsors included Monsanto, Procter and Gamble, the Philippine Academy of Microbiology, Pemsa, Paddington Trading, Maxim, Bernard, Asia Laboratories, Mixer and Castle Corp. and Merck.

For more on biotechnology education, go to www.nimbb.upd.edu.ph.

E-mail the author at bautista@yahoo.com.

Law, advocacy and kids . . .

From page G3

body with police powers.

The kids also showed they knew current issues and what was happening in other parts of the country as they asked the interviewees about the alleged culling of pine trees by the giant 3M retail chain. Romeo and the town mayor of major concern to Baguio residents because the 3M store is the only remaining greenbelt area" in the city.

She added, however, that the publicity resulting from the issue had the positive effect of awakening the city's residents to the importance of conservation, even when "not the right to participate in activities" that would affect them.

Giving her young audience more welcome homework to chew, passionately good-naturedly, she added the commission also guaranteed every Filipino's right to a balanced healthy environment and that, under the local environment code, the people could be involved within any action that would impact the environment was taken.

Like the other interviewers in the two previous workshops, Ramos closely found the case clinic to interact with young people a very rewarding and enlightening experience.

Journal Pioneers and Guides, June 10-21, Aug. 29-31, Oct. 10-19 and May. 20-29.

Contact (0920) 9205 Ma. Mae Lalisan, Forest Building, A. Soriano Street, Intramuros, Manila. tel. (02) 5230221; or Fort Santiago on Bihar Lee, tel. (02) 5230176.

Private companies, local government agencies and private colleges may contact Bonito and/or PPPI to conduct seminars/workshops. PPPI is the organizer of Photowalk Asia, the biggest and longest running photography event in Southeast Asia.

Learn how to do well in law school

THE CENTER for Global Best Practices (CGBP) is holding a two-day seminar-workshop on "How to Excel in Law School," April 28-29, at the Four Manila Hotel on United Nations Avenue, Manila.

The pre-law program is designed to help participants survive and excel in law schools, even top the bar examination after graduation.

It will teach participants how to prepare for bar exams and how to master the eight bar subjects. They can learn what to expect in law school and how to improve their professors, handle personal issues and deal with law firms.

School personnel, graduates, memories and counselors.

The conference will also give insights and suggestions on what law books to read.

The comprehensive program, based on the book "How to Excel in Law School," will teach participants how to master the subject, lawyer Jim R. Lopez. Other lecturers include bar topnotcher Andres B. Gautista, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government and dean of the Far Eastern University Law School.

Pre-registration is required as only 30 participants will be accepted. Seminar fee is P5,000, inclusive of lunch and certificate of attendance. Early bird and group discounts are available. Call (632) 8451165 or 9088668 or e-mail center@cgbp.org. Visit www.cgbp.org for other seminars.

Chinatown mall holds first back-to-school fair

THE LUCKY Chinatown Mall Mall in Reina Regente, Binondo, Manila, will hold its first back-to-school fair on April 29 to May 5.

The mall will be offering a range of products students will need for the new school year like bags, shoes, gadgets and even musical instruments.

Both kids and adults will have fun choosing the items they need from the different booths.

Shoppers can get books, bags, pens and other things needed for school at the National Book Store, The Travel Mart, Digital Walker, Inc./Gadgets, Precious Metal Printers, Bee Tee Bee, Puma, Converse and Lotto, among others.

Call the Megaworld Lifestyle Malls concierge at 1388888, 3000600, 0917-8088999. Visit www.megaworldlifestyle malls.com.

FOOTNOTES

Professional photographers hold workshops

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS of Philippine Photographers Foundation Inc. (PPPFI) is offering courses on basic, advanced and special photography in Metro Manila and the provinces.

Sessions are held on weekdays and weekends.

A basic course will be conducted April 23-27; Session, Joseph Ballan, April 27-28; June 15-18, July 20-21; Sept. 1-4, Oct. 12-13, Nov. 10-11, and Dec. 14 and 31; Lightroom, Cris Molinos, May 9-12 and June 8 and 16; Photoshop, Egie Mercado, May 13, 20 and 27 and June 3, 10 and 17; Wedding,

Chinatown mall holds first back-to-school fair

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Call the Megaworld Lifestyle Malls concierge at 1388888, 3000600, 0917-8088999. Visit www.megaworldlifestyle malls.com.

PAUKI and Bridle Orota

FUTURE entrepreneurs enjoy running their booth.

YOUNG chefs and their baked goodies

Kids show off biz skills

By Stephen Marvin B. Padilla

MANY children think about playing all day or going to the beach during the long school break.

But 6-year-old Bridle wanted to sell lemonade to her neighbors. Unfortunately, living in a condominium was not a viable way to start her business. She thought of a place for kids like her who wanted to become young entrepreneurs.

Then came Kiddo-preneur Bazaar, a mini marketplace that allowed kids to hone their sales smarts and sell anything they wanted.

The first bazaar was held in December at The Boulevard Club in Makati City. It had its second run recently at the Alphaland Tents, also in Makati.

Bridle's mother Maiki Orera, inspired by her daughter's entrepreneurial spirit, founded the bazaar. The ABS-CBN business news anchor, through word of mouth and Facebook, convinced other parents to let their kids join the event.

"We, as parents, need resources to teach our children the value of money," Orera said.

"Kidlit!" items are offered by three young but serious-looking retailers.

JUNIOR Master Painter versus Sandra Yeoh (center) with cousins Ram and Raj Nanal

JUNIOR cousins go green and organic (above); young booksellers in red are all smiles (left)

"This is a really important life lesson."

The reception was as good on the first run that Orera advised school teachers not during the school vacation. She now plans to make Kiddo-preneur a semi-annual event—during the long vacation and the Christmas break, when kids are free from schoolwork.

Orera admitted she felt guilty knowing that Filipino parents told their children to study hard so they could land good jobs, while Chinese-Filipino parents told their sons and daughters to study hard so they could have successful businesses in the future.

Earning, saving, investing and donating are some of the uses of money that Kiddo-preneur wants to inculcate among participants. The bazaar also gives children an opportunity to consider careers in business in the future.

Although she was quick to state there was nothing wrong with being an employee, Orera felt the country needed more young people who were money-wise and had a strong business inclination, to ensure a better life for themselves and to uplift the Philippine economy.

"When it comes to learning about money and how to make it grow, the only ones who can teach them are their parents, until they're old enough and they learn on their own through trial and error," Orera said.

Entrepreneur Roland Juan urged his three daughters and three nephews to join the bazaar. Together, they put up Juanstopreneur, a booth that sold mostly raw natural and organic products.

It also offered other services for P10 to P20 like bubble wraps, bubble rubbers, Kiddo jokes and bubble models.

One of the resort's bestsellers was the Kiddo-loring Slush, made by individuals with disabilities from Bahay Pangarap. What was special about the piggy bank was that it had four slots to teach kids to save, invest, donate and spend money wisely.

Juan's daughters—Blanche, 13; Francine, 8; and Caroline, 4—and nephews Ellen, 14; Regine, 8; and Max, 11 were at the booth to entertain customers.

"What's your skin type?" Maxine asked a woman who was passing by. The customer was so impressed by the questions that she jumped to exchange information with the young entrepreneur and bought a couple of bar soaps.

Aside from allowing the kids to earn money, the bazaar gave kids something more important.

"I learned about the different uses of money," Maxine said. "Some of the money is to be

SEE PAGE 10

LPU-Manila's tourism students represent PH in PATA meet

THREE of the top-achieving tourism students of the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management (CITHM) of the Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU), Manila, attended recently the Pacific Asia Travel Association's (PATA) Youth Forum in Kuala Lumpur.

Theme of the forum hosted by the Division of Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts of Taylor's University in Malaysia was "Building the Business Beyond Thrills, Creating Social and Environmental Value."

The LPU delegation, the only representative from the Philippines, consisted of Adrienne Gwen Calibusa, Ryan Cedric Flores and Kristine Yap, students who excelled in academic performance and extracurricular activities. They were accompanied by CITHM faculty member Judy Limpiroz.

The group participated in all working sessions that covered Green Economy Innovations in Events, Social Tourism, and Tourism Education.

(FROM left) Miriam Grace, CITHM's tourism chair; Calibusa, Flores, Yap, Limpiroz and Bob Escobedo, CITHM's senior officer in charge

For more information on LPU Manila's tourism programs and other hospitality management courses, call 527-1744 (CITHM) or 527-8201 c/o Communications and Public Affairs Department.

Youth urged to speak out against domestic violence

AVON is inviting young people, including students, to join the public service ad competition on domestic violence.

The company for women encourages the youth to join its Speak Out Public Service Ad Competition as they can make their voices count in the fight against domestic violence, help break the cycle of abuse and call attention to the critical issue.

Deadline for submission of entries is on May 9.

The top three winners will receive cash prizes of P75,000, P50,000 and P25,000.

Avon's Speak Out against Domestic Violence campaign aims to call attention to a problem that is still hardly discussed in the Philippines.

It points out that domestic violence goes beyond physical abuse and that even young people can be victims.

To join, they should form groups of three to five and log on to the Avon website (http://www.avon.com.ph) to download the official application form. After filling out the form, it should be submitted, with the other requirements, by e-mail to avonspeak.ast@gmail.com on or before May 9.

Visit www.facebook.com/AvonPhilippines, www.avon.com.ph and follow Avon at www.twitter.com/Avon911.

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT—NOT JUST MODELING

Master's School for Models (MSM) does not only train aspiring models to strut like perfect pros or walk down the runway but also how they can improve themselves and be the best persons they can be.

Since it opened in 2010, the school, headed by Joey Espino, has had several notable graduates, namely, Ford Supermodel of the World 2006 third runner-up Cory Quirino, 2010 Binibining Pilipinas Charity Chiu and Miss Universe 2011 grand winner Shamcey Supsup, and this year's contender, Samantha Gomez. Ford Models New York's Rain Sajad, Cat Cartier's Philippe Escudero Jr., and the up-and-coming Mars Naoh are also alumni.

MSM has modules on Basic Modeling and Secretary Course to Professional Modeling courses in Photographic Modeling, Commercial Modeling, and Runway Modeling, as well as classes on Portfolio Making, Print Modeling, and International Modeling.

Photographic Modeling and Portfolio Making teach students how to have the best shots for their portfolios, while Commercial Modeling covers pre-classes on acting and speaking.

Espino says the school also tries to instill values and thinking hacks, whether or not students want to become models. It offers personality development workshops that aim to develop well-rounded and empowered individuals.

Call (0917) 811-6867 or e-mail info@masterschoolformodels.com or visit http://masterschoolformodels.com.

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MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE ACCOUNT - PHILIPPINES

Uplifting Lives of Filipinos through Economic Growth

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Republic of the Philippines

IFB/SNRDP/CP3/333330
Millennium Challenge Account-Philippines
Secondary National Roads Development Project (SNRDP)
Contract Package CP3

11th April 2012

Dear Madam/Sir:

The Millennium Challenge Corporation ("MCC") and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines have entered into a Millennium Challenge Compact for Millennium Challenge Account assistance to help facilitate poverty reduction through economic growth in the Philippines (the "Compact") in the amount of approximately **434 Million USD** ("MCC Funding"). The Government, acting through the Millennium Challenge Account – Philippines (the "Employer"), intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of MCC Funding to eligible payments under a Contract associated with this Invitation for Bids ("IFB"). Payments by the Employer will be subject, in all respects, to the terms and conditions, including restrictions on the use of MCC Funding, of the Compact. No party other than the Government and the Employer shall derive any rights from the Compact or have any claim to the proceeds of MCC Funding.

The Compact Program which would be implemented over a 5-year period includes projects that would reduce poverty through economic growth, among others, the **Secondary National Roads Development Project (SNRDP)**.

The SNRDP Road Project involves the construction/rehabilitation of existing roads and bridges that includes road widening, pavement strengthening, improved drainage and traffic calming measures. The project will incorporate enhanced safety measures in the final road designs including paved shoulders, construction of sidewalks and curbs where pedestrian activity is higher, improved road marking, installation of road furniture and the creation of a 'buffer zone' through populated areas.

SNRDP Road Project will be undertaken under the following four (4) contracts located in Region 8 of the Philippines: Samar and Eastern Samar Provinces:

- **CP1**: Contract Package CP1: "Road Rehabilitation, Buray Junction to Barangay Tinuy-an (16.3 kms); Municipality of Paranas.
- **CP2**: Contract Package CP2: "Road Rehabilitation, Barangay Tinuy-an to San Julian/Sulat Municipal Boundary (63.8 kms)
- **CP3**: Contract Package CP3: "Road Rehabilitation, San Julian/Sulat Municipal Boundary to Balangkayan/Llorente Municipal Boundary (64.8 kms)
- **CP4**: Contract Package CP4: "Road Rehabilitation, Balangkayan/Llorente Municipal Boundary to Guiuan (75.5 kms)

The Employer now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the execution and completion of **Contract Package CP3**, which is being offered as a unit price contract based on the Bill of Quantities. The contract duration is 1,095 days. The anticipated commencement date of the contract is 15th August 2012.

The Bidding Documents will be provided to Bidders in electronic format at no cost. Bidders must request the bidding documents by sending an e-mail to the address indicated below, stating whether they prefer to pick up a CD/DVD copy or to download it from a web link that shall be provided to them:

Millennium Challenge Account – Philippines
c/o: Procurement Agent
Attention: Procurement Agent Manager / Procurement Director
Email: **procurementagent@philippines.bbcl.com**

A firm will be selected under the Competitive Bidding procedures described in this Invitation for Bids. Bidders are advised that these procedures are governed by the MCC Program Procurement Guidelines (see: **http://www.mcc.gov/pages/business/guidelines**). Although these procedures are similar to those set out in the World Bank Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits, there are several significant differences and firms are advised to review these instructions carefully.

Please note that a Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **09 May 2012 at 10:00 Hours** Philippine Time / GMT +8 at the Millennium Challenge Account – Philippines, Board Room, 2nd Floor Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) Building, San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Philippines.

The deadline for the submission of bids is on 19 June 2012 at 10:00 Hours Philippine Time / GMT + 8.

Bids shall be submitted to the following address:

Millennium Challenge Account – Philippines
Procurement Agent Office
2nd Floor, Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) Building
San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1606, Philippines

The Bids will be opened on **19 June 2012 at 10:00 Hours Philippine Time / GMT + 8**.

All Bids must be accompanied by a security in the form and amount specified in the Bidding Documents. Bidders should be aware that distance and customs formalities may require longer than expected delivery time. **Late Bids will be rejected and returned unopened.**

Yours sincerely,

For MCA-Philippines:
(Original signed)

Eleanora E. Tan
Deputy Managing Director, Finance and Administration
MCA—Philippines

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

HOUSEHOLD

HOUSEHOLD HIRE

LOST BANK

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDOTHERSE

STA MESA CONDO

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

CONDOTHERSE

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

WAREHOUSE/ FACTORY

LOAN & MORTGAGE

CARS

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CAR LOAN

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

PETS

WANTED TO BUY

ROLEX LOUIS VUITTON

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CAR LOAN

HIRING!
Office Secretary

Female, Bachelor's degree holder or higher, must have excellent English communication skills both oral and written.

Interested applicants may e-mail their current resume or curriculum vitae to **ahi@ahi.com.ph**

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given to the public that **MAPFRE INSULAR INSURANCE CORPORATION** Agency/Provincial Accepts were lost.

PR # 963005, 963018, 963019, 1613364, 1613368

The foregoing receipts are hereby declared void; any transaction involving any of the said receipts shall not be honored by anyone and void ipso facto.

MAPFRE INSULAR INSURANCE CORPORATION

PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ANIMALS

Manila Water

Invitation to Bid

Name of Country: Republic of the Philippines
Name of Project: Taguig North Sub-Catchment Sewerage Project,
Construction of Package 2: Makati South, Sewer Relief Line and Pump Station

Manila Water Company Incorporated (MWSI) with its thrust to expand wastewater services for their service concession area is planning to implement one of its major projects: The Taguig North Sewerage Project is part of MWSI's Masterwater Master Plan for the said concession in general, the Master Plan aims to provide adequate sewerage and sanitation services.

MWSI would like to invite interested and eligible contracting firms (local and foreign) to submit bids for Construction of Package 2 for the Taguig North Sewerage Project.

Applicants interested to obtain the bid documents (including Instructions to Bidders, Scope of Work and Bid Evaluation Criteria) are required to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to participate in this project. The Letter of Intent should be submitted to and copy of the bid documents can be obtained from the office of engr. Jillanda Velez Company Nominated Procurement Management Consultancy, with receipt details shown below.

Bid documents will be made available electronically (UP April 2012) and shall be free of charge. Deadline for the submission of LOI shall not be later than 10th May 2012.

Applicants are encouraged to attend the bid orientation that will be conducted on 03rd May 2012 at 2:00 PM at Manila Water office (MWSI Main Office Administration Building, MWSS 489, Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, 1105).

Bid offers should be submitted in sealed envelopes delivered to the Manila Water Office (MWCI Main Office Administration Building, MWSS 489, Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, 1105) on or before 2:00 PM on 25 May 2012 and be clearly marked "Taguig North Sub-Catchment Sewerage Project: Construction of Package 2: Makati South, Sewer Relief Line and Pump Station".

Late submissions will not be accepted.

For further information, the Project Management Consultant's address is:

Cristina Estrochartes
Senior Manager, Contracts and Vendor Management Department
Manila Water Company Incorporated

hire now www.jobmarketonline.com

Feliza Jamila-Laurio

February 21, 1912 - April 21, 2012

peacefully joined her Creator and husband Felicalo at age 100.

Her loving children **Alice** and **Boanerges Relativo†**, **Rowena** and **Manuel Fortez†**, **Felicalo (Dan)†** and **Gaia Ang†**, **Nancy** and **Jovencio Ordoña**, **Elsa Mae** and **Leonardo Martinez**, surviving sibling **Rodolfo Jamila**, grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to join the family in praying for her eternal repose.

Her remains lie in state at the Relativo residence at Balogo, Sorsogon City, Sorsogon.

Interment will be on Tuesday, April 24, 2012 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Sorsogon Cemetery.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4)

VICTORIANO M. PANCHO

August 27, 1927 - April 22, 2012

Lovingly remembered by:

His wife, Leonarda M. Pancho
Children: Susan, Eric Jose, and Nilda, son-in-law, Carlos
Grandchildren: Arielle & Daniel
relatives and friends request prayers for his eternal life.

His remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapels, Quezon Avenue corner Scout Chuatoco, Quezon City.

Funeral Mass and Interment: Tuesday, April 24, 2012.

NORMA DAYAO REYES

(Norma Reyes passed away on April 17, 2012 at the age of 63)

Her husband Ernesto Reyes; children Lea Anthony Reyes, Lorraine Isabelle Reyes and Ernesto Miguel Reyes; brothers and sisters-in-law; nephews and nieces; and the whole family of Mrs. Norma Dayao Reyes invite relatives, friends, colleagues and former classmates to attend the Holy Mass in state at Caloocan Memorial Chapels, Dr. Lazcano Street, Caloocan City.

Interment will take place at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 24, 2012 at Manila Memorial Park - Sucat, Parañaque City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

- Copy of Death Certificate;
- Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT •
MESSAGE OF THANKS •
DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS •
FREE OBIT DESIGN

CLASSIFIEDS

Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation

NOTICE TO BIDDERS ON THE SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION, CONFIGURATION AND COMMISSIONING OF ONE (1) LOT VIDEO CONFERENCING SOLUTION AND ONE (1) LOT OF DIGITAL MEDIA SIGNAGE SOLUTION

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) is inviting all interested bidders in the forthcoming public bidding for the Supply, Delivery, Installation, Configuration and Commissioning of One (1) Lot Video Conferencing Solution and One (1) Lot Digital Media Signage Solution under ITB No.GHI-12-0012

Brief Description :	One (1) Lot Video Conferencing Solution • Endpoints (LifeSize 150) • Multipoint Control Unit • Cameras, USB HD • Server Soft Firewall Traversal • Recording and Streaming Server • Management Server One One (1) Lot Digital Media Signage Solution • Digital Media Player • Digital Media Management Server
Delivery, Installation, Configuration and Commissioning Schedule :	Within thirty (30) calendar days from the effectivity date specified in the Notice to Proceed/Delivery
Approved Budget :	Lot 1: PHP 900,000.00 (PHP 50,000.00/Unit); VAT Exclusive, Zero Rated Transactions Lot 2: Three Million Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (PHP 3,200,000.00); VAT Exclusive, Zero Rated Transactions
Source of Fund :	Internally Funded

NOTE: Bidders may bid on one or both lots

The bidding is open to all suppliers, provided that the winning bidder should be registered with PAGCOR prior to award of contract. Unregistered suppliers must register at the Supplier's Registration & Evaluation Section (SRES), Procurement Department (PD), 3rd Floor PAGCOR House, 1796 Roxas Blvd. Pmda. Manila, Tel. No. 5210-0872.

Bidders should have completed within a period five (5) years before the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly, in One Bid and Instructions to Bidders. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138.

All particulars relative to the Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification are indicated in bidding documents governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184, IRR and its GPPB.

The schedule of activities is listed as follows:

	Activities	Schedule
a.	Issuance of Bid Documents	23 April (Monday) to 8 May (Wednesday) 2012
b.	Pre-Bid Conference	2 April 2012 (Monday) 10:00 a.m.
c.	Deadline for Submission of Bids	8 May 2012 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m.
d.	Opening of Bids	8 May 2012 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. (onwards)

Complete details of the project are indicated in the bid documents which will be available to prospective bidders at the PAGCOR Secretariat Unit, Procurement Department (PMD-PD), upon payment of a non-refundable bidding fee which shall be provided by the PAGCOR Secretariat Unit (PSU) upon request.

Prospective bidders may also download the Bidding Documents free of charge from the following websites: www.pagcor.ph and www.philgeps.gov.ph and may be allowed to submit bids provided that bidders shall pay the non-refundable bidding fee not later than the date of the submission of bids. The Pre-bid Conference is open to all interested bidders; however, only those bidders who have purchased the Bidding Documents shall be allowed to participate in the official Pre-bid as proof of payment, may participate in the discussion at the said conference or submit written queries or clarifications. Prospective bidders should proceed to PAGCOR Secretariat Unit, 3rd Floor PAGCOR Corporate Office, 1796 Roxas Blvd. cor Pedro Gil St., Malate, Manila either the Bidding Fee (No refund) may be secured from the PSU-ATS in a copy of this ITB in effecting payment for the Bidding Documents. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause 14.

PAGCOR assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

PAGCOR reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Please address all communications to the Bids and Awards Committee thru the Secretariat Unit, Room 309, Ground Floor, PAGCOR House, 1796 Roxas Boulevard 1004, Manila, Tel No. 526-8371, 521-1542 loc.2309/31.

(Sgd.) LUCITA L.V. SINGPIN
Chairperson
Bids and Awards Committee I
(PA) - April 23, 2012

Republic of the Philippines
DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
Ma. A. Jose P. Lizada Avenue, Bajada, Davao City
Telephone Nos. (+63) (82) 221-9480
Fax: (+63) (82) 226-4893
Website: http://davaocity.wd.gov.ph

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE 2012 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

1. Davao City Water District intends to apply the sum of Two Million Eighty-Eight Thousand Two Hundred Seventeen Pesos (PHP 2,088,217.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the 2012 Customer Satisfaction Survey. Bids received in excess of this ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of the bids/proposals.
2. Davao City Water District now calls for the submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) / Expression of Interest (EOI) and Application for eligibility for the above-stated procurement project. The project intends to gather information on the satisfaction of stakeholders in terms of customer's capacity to access services, quality of water provided and availability of water supply, among others, in order to find where water supply problems. The scope of services of the project includes questionnaire design, printing, personnel recruitment, data processing, calculation and interpretation of results, final report writing and preparation of inputs to the Project Coordinator, and presentation to the Board of Directors.
3. Interested consulting firms must submit their LOI/EOI no later than May 4, 2012 to the BAC-II Secretariat at Davao City Water District, J.P. Laurel Avenue, Bajada, Davao City.
4. The submission and opening of eligibility documents is on May 25, 2012, 9:00 o'clock in the morning, at DCWD Conference Room, J.P. Laurel Avenue, Bajada, Davao City. Late submissions, requirements not complete will be accepted. The opening of eligibility documents shall be made in a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria.
5. Only the Five (5) highest ranked consultants shall be considered for shortlisting. The ranking shall be determined based on the criteria and rating system, as follows:

Consulting Firm:	
Years of Experience	- 20%
Number of Projects Undertaken	- 5%
Average Sample Size per Project	- 5%
Individual Consultant (Principal, Consultant/Technical Writer and Statistician) Qualifications:	
Educational Attainment	- 20%
Relevant Training/Seminars	- 10%
Relevant Work Experience	- 30%
Current Work Load	- 10%
TOTAL	**- 100%**

6. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures along non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria as specified in the 2010 IRR-RA 9184.

   Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines.
7. The Procuring Entity shall evaluate bids using the Quality-Cost Based Evaluation (QCBE) procedure. To qualify for the project, the prospective Consulting Firm must have completed at least one (1) similar project in the last five (5) years. The Consulting Firm ranking system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
8. The contract shall be completed within **Ninety (90) calendar days**.
9. Davao City Water District reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award any contract as per item 2 hereof, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.
10. For further information, please refer to:

The BAC-II Secretariat
Davao City Water District
J.P. Laurel Avenue, Bajada, 8000 Davao City
Telephone Nos. (+63) (82) 221-9480 local 224 or 244
Fax: (+63) (82) 226-4893
Website: http://davaocity.wd.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **ENGR. ROMEO G. SARMIN**
BAC-II Chairperson
(PA) - April 23, 2012

Republic of the Philippines
Commission on Audit
Regional Office No. VII
St. 3, Cuenco Avenue cor V. Sotto Sts.,
Cebu City

Section I. Invitation to Bid for PROCUREMENT OF IT EQUIPMENT & SOFTWARE
(Project Reference No.: PB 000-04-2012)

1. The Commission on Audit intends to apply the sum of Nine Million Nine Hundred Eighteen Thousand Pesos (Php 9,918,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for Bids received in excess of this ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening.
2. The COMMISSION ON AUDIT now invites bids for **Procurement of IT Equipment & Software**. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly, in Section II. Instructions to Bidders.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act". Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to the citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138. Bidding is open to all interested contractors, whether local or foreign, subject to the conditions for eligibility contained in the IRR of RA 9184.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders starting April 23, 2012 upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **Nine Thousand Pesos (Php9,000.00)** from the Cashier Section, 2nd floor, Regional Office No. VII, M. J. Cuenco Avenue cor V. Sotto Sts., Cebu City.
5. The Commission on Audit will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **04 PM, May 3, 2012** at COA Conference Room, 2nd floor, Regional Office No. VII Main Bldg., M. J. Cuenco Avenue cor V. Sotto Sts., Cebu City.
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **May 10, 2012 at 11:00 PM**. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in either of the following forms and amounts:

FORMS OF BID SECURITY	%AGE AMT.	AMOUNT
a. Cash, Cashier's/Manager's check	2%	P 423,840.00
b. Surety Bond (BSD)	5%	P 1,059,600.00

Late Bids shall not be accepted.

7. Deadline for submission of Bids shall be on **May 10, 2012, 11:00 AM** at COA Conference Room, 2nd floor, Regional Office No. VII Main Bldg., M. J. Cuenco Avenue cor V. Sotto Sts., Cebu City. All Bids shall be addressed to:

ATTY. NILO C. PAILA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
Commission on Audit
M. J. Cuenco Avenue cor V. Sotto Sts.,
Cebu City

Immediately after the deadline, all Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend the bid opening.

8. The Commission on Audit thru the BAC, Regional Office No. VII, M. J. Cuenco Avenue cor V. Sotto Sts., Cebu City reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. NILO C. PAILA**
BAC Chairman
(PA) - April 23, 2012

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The product CARGILEAN PLUS PREMIX POWDER – *A Total Lean Meat Enhancer for Animals*, is locally and exclusively manufactured by **CARGINOL LABORATORIES, INC.** and distributed Nationwide. Any unauthorized distribution and/or selling of the said product and any products locally manufactured and distributed by CARGINOL LABORATORIES, INC., is punishable by law.

For information of the public **ENERGI ANIMAL HEALTH CARE** is the only and exclusive distributor of CARGILEAN PLUS PREMIX POWDER in Mindanao, Managed and Operated by: **Dr. Ely S. Barcelia, D.V.M.** and **Mr. Celso Nayabos** P. Bl. Sta. (084) 201-4080; +639223852188 Tels: (083) 552 9562; +639228560356

For more information, you may contact **CARGINOL LABORATORIES, INC.** at (632) 864 5177 and (632) 668 2377, with principal office at The Royal Star Building, #43 Rose St., Royal Subdivision, Manila East Road Taytay Rizal. Contact Person: **Sheila Kristine Cruz**

(PA) - April 23, 2012

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"To my fellow public servants in the LTO, our mutual experiences have included a test here for each other. I consider you my family, and I thank each and every one of you for the trust. Your faith in us keeps us strong.

We still have time to embrace our work, and I am sure that before all of us step away from government service, we can say that we have given our contribution to nation building. Like what I said before when I addressed all of you for the first time, together, we can make a difference.

To the next generations, the work we do now would serve as the foundation of the work you shall do in the future. Just like what we have done with the LTO handed to us by those who served before our time, build on and expand from our experiences.

If the policies and standards set are now outdated for your time, uphold them. If they no longer respond to the needs of your time, change them. If there are modern and shortcomings we cannot turn that shall impede the growth or setback the LTO in the future, please correct them. If we have successes worth replicating, embrace them. If we have plans left undone that would benefit the LTO, pursue them.

I am sure that those before us have given their best. I am quite positive that those who share with me this time with the LTO, the best years of our lives have been dedicated to our country in greater part. We could only work on what we could now to make the LTO the best it could be at these times, and be a strong contribution of the government for the future. Reasons for the men and women of the LTO now, we could only hope that our contribution to the legacy of public service in the LTO would resonate to the lives of the next generation of Filipinos."

—Excerpt from the message of
Assistant Secretary Virginia P. Torres
in the LTO Centennial Yearbook.

www.lto.gov.ph

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www.comelco.com.ph

TEL. No. (043) 491 1981
(043) 491 1021
FAX No. (043) 491 1364

Invitation
For Expression of Interest, To Pre-qualify and To Bid

The Occidental Mindoro Electric Cooperative, Inc. (OMECO) invites all interested parties in the Private Sector Participation for Power Generation in Municipal Centralized Mindoro for the Supply of 20 MW Power Plant for Full (Capacity, Energy and Reserve) Requirement – "the Transaction, in Occidental Mindoro.

Information on OMECO, the Transaction Information Memorandum and other details pertinent to the transaction are available at the Official Transaction Webpage, http://www.omeco.com.ph/TransAds.html. All further inquiries shall be directed to the Bids and Awards Committee through e-mail at TransAds@comelco.com.ph

Interested parties must submit duly Sworn Letter/Expression of Interest ("LOIs"), which shall contain their full names, addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses and the names of their contact persons. The LEOI shall be signed by an authorized representative of the interested party and accompanied by the following Qualification Requirements:

(i) Proof of technical capability in the form of relevant experience in similar projects in the last five (5) years, indicating and describing the project type, key project features, location, client, contact person and contact details; and

(ii) Proof of financial capacity in the form of audited financial statements (balance sheet, income statement and cash flow) in the last five (5) years.

You may submit your LEOIs in the designated official address. For details, kindly check the Official Transaction Webpage.

All LEOIs must be received by the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 24, 2012 (the "LEOI Submission Deadline"). Only the parties that submit LEOIs and Qualification Requirements by the LEOI Submission Deadline shall be considered for pre-qualification. Only the parties that pass the pre-qualification ("Bidders") shall be issued Notices of Qualification to Submit Bids and shall be allowed to procure the bidding package in the amount of to be posted in the Official Transaction Webpage. Thereafter, bidders shall only be allowed to submit bids after submission of the Confidentiality Agreement and Undertaking and Acceptance of the Bidding Procedures (posted on the website).

The BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder at any time from, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defect contained therein, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to the award of the PSA without disclosing any reason therefor, nor incurring any liability thereby. The BAC does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify parties for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the bidding nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

Finally, the BAC reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the bidding procedures and other aspects of the bidding process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders shall be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements or changes.

(SJC) ERIK IRORY A. BONDALES
Chairman
OMECO Bids and Awards Committee

yuenthai

YUENTHAI PHILIPPINES INC.
[illegible]

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SR. FINANCE MANAGER

- Graduate of Bachelor of Science in Accountancy
- Must be Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
- At least 10 years solid experience in Financial Management position
- Adept to all functions in General Accounting, especially to date pertaining to controls in order to plan budgets
- Ensures and monitors compliance of all operational and legal requirements
- Advisable knowledge in SAP applications
- Must be female and proficient in English Language
- Must be detail-oriented and excellent in leadership skills
- Field organized and diligent assistant, with sense of urgency and results-oriented person
- Flexible and can work under pressure and has pro-active mindset
- Knowledge in Lean Management System is an advantage

CUTTING MANAGER

- Graduate in garment technology or any 4 years course
- At least 7 years solid experience in Cutting Management position
- Adept to all functions in Cutting Management, especially to: cutting production planning, scheduling, fabric spreading, fabric inspection, and quality control cutting to specifications and standards
- Meets production targets and delivery deadlines
- Must have good interpersonal skills, patient, and a natural leader
- Knowledge of Garter machine making and automated cutter is advantage
- Knowledge of sewing and its compatibility is advantage but not essential
- Must have good interpersonal and organizational skills with leadership quality
- Must possess excellent communication skills
- Must have decision-making and strong problem solving ability
- Team player with positive attitude and self-motivated
- Flexible and can work under pressure and has pro-active mindset
- Knowledge in Lean Management System is an advantage

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS WILL RECEIVE ABOVE INDUSTRY COMPENSATION

Interested applicants must submit their application letter and resume with 2x2 picture to:

Human Resources Department
Yuenthai Philippines, Inc.
MEPZ I, Lapu-lapu City,
Cebu, Philippines 6015

Or email us at: [illegible]

People, Events & Products

E-mail: supplements@inquirer.com.ph
Supplements Head: Jong Arcadio

AYALA LAND'S P11 BILLION BONDS LAUNCHED

AYALA Land, Inc. recently launched its public offer of P11 billion bonds, the largest debt issue of the Company to date. The public offer will run from April 18, 2012 until 5 p.m. of April 23, 2012, issue date for the Bonds is scheduled on April 27, 2012. Present at the signing ceremony were, from left, Antonio V. Viseo Jr., president, BDO Capital; Nestor F. Tan, president, MDO Unibank, Inc., president, BPI Capital Corp.; Aurelio Montinola III, president, DPI; Delfin Ty-Tuad, senior vice president and Chief Finance officer, Ayala Land, Inc.; Antonino Aquino, president and chief executive officer, Ayala Land, Inc.; Bernardo Belgica, vice president and treasurer, Ayala Land, Inc.; Alfred Ventura, managing director, treasurer and head of Global Markets, The Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corp., Ltd. Cirilo Fortunna, senior vice president and head of debt capital markets, The Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corp., Ltd. Arthur Ty, president, Metrobank and Anjo Bisuo, President, First Metro Investment Corporation.

BPI Family Savings Bank holds Housing Madness in Bacolod

FOR the fourth time in the City of Smiles, BPI Family Savings Bank (BFSB) opened the doors of the Housing Madness over the weekend in Robinsons Place in Bacolod City.

The bank offered low rates and flexible payment terms for people seeking to own their homes during the Boom-day Madness.

For this year, 10 partner developers showcased their projects.

They are Ayala Land Inc., Ayala Land Corp., Amaia Land Corp., Dynamic Properties and Realty Corp., Pryce Land and Housing Devt. Corp., BSPI Realty Development Corp., Communities Negros Occ. Inc. (Camella), AFP Mutual Corp., Philippine Diversified Development Corp., and Home Invest Realty Warehouse Inc.

"The housing madness is a very special gathering for us because first, we are bringing it again here in Bacolod with better and grander promo offers, second, we are providing a venue for people to get deals early and quickly by putting these developers under one roof, and third, we are proud to introduce our new housing loan variant, the Housing Loan Plus Bonds or "ang Housing Loan na may Pep Hugs". A one-of-a-kind housing loan feature that allows the borrower to skip a month from paying his monthly amortization, another way of making it easy for our clients to purchase their homes," said Jose Teodoro Limcaoco, president of BPI Family Savings Bank.

For more information about BPI Family Savings Bank Housing Loans, please call their trunkline at 845-0888 or visit their website at www.bpi.com.ph or www.bpifamily.com/bpihome.

(L-r) Invocare, president of BPI Family Savings Bank Edgar Sia Jose, SVP and head of Consumer Lending Group of BPI Family Savings Bank Marivic Rojas, head of BPI Bacolod Business Center with partner developers Shallimi Gonzales, Home Invest Realty Ventures Inc.; Glory Fuentebella of Philippine Diversified Development Corp. and Tommie Bonoanan of Ayala North Point at the opening of the fourth Housing Madness.

Smart backs search for tech start-ups

SMART Communications, Inc. (Smart) is further strengthening its ties with the technology start-up community in it backs ONE 2012, a nationwide search and business plan competition launched by the Science and Technology Advisory Council, Silicon Valley (STAC-Silicon Valley or STAC).

Board Member of STAC recently traveled to the Philippines kick-off ONE 2012 last April 16 in Cebu City. The ONE is the second ONE competition wig followed by Mindanao at Bridgestone College in Davao City last April 17 and the first part of the Luzon regionals was conducted last April 18 at the Philippine College of Science and Technology in Bacolod.

The Southern Luzon & NCR regionals will be held on Thursday, April 19 at Mapúa International College in Tagaytay City. On April 21, the Grid Business Plan Competition will be conducted at MIST College in Tagaytay City.

"We are excited once again to conduct our ongoing search for emerging tech companies in the Philippines. The initial launch of ONE in 2011 enjoyed a healthy start as we engaged the delegates with the tech start-up community, academe and the private sector. We believe our efforts were further augmented with new partnerships and several announcements of new angel funds in 2012. One significant challenge of the start up community a lack of funding for very early stage companies. Therefore, we were extremely pleased to close this three significant mobile market players came forward this year to help address this need said Christian Laukowski, president of STAC - Silicon Valley."

"Smart has very strong ties existing ties with tech communities through our Smart Wireless Engineering Education Program (SWEEP), our mobile developer program and our participation at ideaSpace. Supporting ONE 2012's efforts with the ONE competition is complementary to our efforts. Partnerships are important in helping our technology entrepreneurs transition their ideas into viable global business" said Orlando B. Vea, Chief Wireless Advisor, Smart.

Smart has 45 partner colleges and universities through its SWEEP program.

Globe, SM awards TechnoMarine watches to 'Time to Reload' winners

GLOBE TELECOM in partnership with SM Retail, Inc. recently awarded TechnoMarine watches to the new winners of the Globe Prepaid and SM Time to Reload promo.

The winners, clockwise from left-bulge: Suzzo 14th (top from left) from SM Southmall, Las Piñas, Ramon Ignacio (2nd from left) from SM City North EDSA, Daniel Dennis (2nd from left) from SM City Southmall, and Warlen Ambie Brion (2nd from left) from SM City San Pablo in Laguna-all received their Technomarine watches worth over P24,500 each at awarding ceremonies held at SM Department store branches where they submitted their winning call cards.

The Time to Reload promo, which ran from October 1, 2011 to February 20, 2012, gave a chance to Globe Prepaid subscribers to win TechnoMarine watches just by buying 'Time to Reload' Globe Call Cards and scratching the back of the cards to reveal a letter and completing the letters to form SM-U-L-O-A-D.

Globe subscribers who have the winning 'Time to Reload' Globe Call Cards still have a chance to claim their TechnoMarine watches up to April 30, 2012.

Sun Business supports Confederation of Rural Banks in Central Luzon

SUN Business, the enterprise solutions arm of Sun Cellular, extended its support to the recent 2012 Annual Management Conference of the Confederation of Central Luzon Rural Banks, Inc. (CCLRB) in Pampanga.

As a dedicated association of rural bankers in the region, the CCLRB is committed to stimulate economic progress and support emerging commercial activities in the rural areas. Currently in its 41st year's membership meeting, the CCLRB aimed at highlighting the role of its rural development projects in contributing to the nation's economic progress.

Further, Sun Business joins the CCLRB in empowering rural-based enterprises through its Mobile Ticketing Service and Goldenrise Solutions. The Mobile Ticketing Service is a convenience service facility that allows rural banks to maximize and extend to client needs via SMS. This text-based service may also be used to send promotional broadcasts and collect client feedback about a particular service.

Meanwhile, the Goldenrise Solution gives rural banks an additional revenue source by allowing their clients to buy Sun Cellular prepaid credits through their existing point of sales. This solution is further supported with a transaction tracking facility that automatically updates client records and bank inventory.

"Following our already extensive support on various commercial banks, we now embark on this advocacy of helping rural banks in their development initiatives for their areas. Through our best value Mobile Banking and Goldenrise Solutions, we're hoping to give them a more efficient and profitable banking system," says Nigh Demonte, summary vice president for Sun Business Marketing.

Demonte together with George Ibeniza, incoming president of the CCLRB, Modesto Carreta, vice president of Sun Business and Jerry Cabrera, outgoing president of the CCLRB recently formalized the deal.

For more information on the enterprise solutions of Sun Business, call the Sun Business 24/7 hotline at 209-0000 (8776) or visit their website at www.sunbusiness.com.ph

MAGBAYA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
MAGELCO
Pinamalayan, Mabini, Maabini

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY

The Magbaya Electric Cooperative, Inc. (MAGELCO) with office address at Poblacion 2, Mabini, Maabini is one of the recipients of a Subsidy Fund from the National Electrification Administration (NEA), now invites bidders that have eligible bidders for the supply and delivery to the Cooperative the Line Materials and Equipments for the construction of distribution lines in Eight (8) Municipalities located in Maabini Cooperative (MEA), to wit:

LOT 2014/PUNOK COVERED

1.) Gen.Mag. Syndicate, Lemery
2.) Pob.#3, Mabini, Alcoco
3.) Punok 1, Mabini, Gamayan
4.) Punok 2, Mabini, Gamayan
5.) Punok 3, Bantayanan, Alcoco
6.) Punok 3, Old Carmen, Gloria
7.) Talibas, Mandaan, Gloria
8.) Punok 1, Mabini, Gamayan

All interested parties shall submit Letter of Intent together with the duly accomplished Bidder's Statement of Eligibility (BSE) and other Documents to the BAC Chairman at MAGELCO Main Office, Poblacion2nd, Mabini, Maabini on or before the date of the Bid Conference and/or making documents may be downloaded from May 1, 2012 from the BAC Secretariat Mr. Martin Gerald C. ALMONACID and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) in the form of cash. Other details of the bidding process and the prequalification, post-qualification and award of contract are further stated in the Philippine Bidding Documents (PBDs).

The MAGELCO reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bid proposals, waive any formalities in the requirements, declare the bidding failure, or to cancel the contract at his/her whims without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Date: **MR. EUGENIO B. DARIO**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE	VENUE
1. Issuance of the Documents	May 2-9, 2012	MAGELCO Main Office
2. Pre-Bid Conference	May 7, 2012 (10:00 AM)	MAGELCO Main Office
3. Last day of Submission of Sealed Bids	May 14, 2012 (10:00 AM)	MAGELCO Main Office
4. Opening of Sealed Bids	May 14, 2012 (10:00 AM)	MAGELCO Main Office
5. Notice of Award	May 15, 2012	MAGELCO Main Office

Submitted by:
Date: **ENGR. EDUARDO N. MARQUELLO, MBA**
Date: **ENGR. ROSE BERTO L. MADERA**
Project Supervisor

GOV'T RECEIVES PNCC SHARE FROM REVENUES OF TOLL CONCESSION COMPANIES

THE government, through the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB), recently received from Cibu Metro Manila Tollway Corporation (CMMTC) and South Luzon Tollway Corporation (SLTC) the share of Philippine National Construction Corporation. Presenting the CMMTC and SLTC checks to TRB Executive Director Edmund O. Abaya (center, left) is CMMTC president and chief executive officer Shoichi Nakano (center, right) while concurrently SLTC president. CMMTC is the concessionaire for the Skyway System while SLTC is for South Luzon Expressway. TRB is an attached agency of the Department of Transportation and Communications that conducts rate-setting operations. Others in photo are (from left) PNCC chairman of the board Jose Vicente C. Ramos Jr. III and PNCC president Luis T. Sison (extreme right).

Perfume making workshop for kids

CHEMIRELIC Fragrance Factory will hold a fun workshop on perfume making designed especially for kids from 7 to 17 years old on May 5, Saturday at 2 p.m. Venue will be the Makati training center located in Old Pasig corner Makati Avenue. With its 2-hour session, participants will get to bring home their very own perfume which they will blend during the hands on training. Familiar fee of P600will cover cost of materials to be used. Parents are welcome to sit in. For reservation and payment, please visit branches of Chemirelic Fragrance Factory in Makati (8864415), Tectonville in Alabang (5425120) and Events Galerie City (5012342), or email fragrancefactory@chemirelic.ph.

Pizza Pedricos launches Love My Pizza campaign

REGIONAL Pizza chain Pizza Pedricos recently unveiled its newest campaign Love Me Pizza! Love Pizza Pedricos! in time with the love month celebrations February. A highlight of this new campaign is the introduction of its newest flavor Meatlover's Delight which is a delicious combination of Pondrosa's Tender Juicy Hotdog slices and mouthwatering sausage bites on signature Pizza Pedricos crust. This will surely have everyone craving for more! Pizza Pedricos is well known for its award winning 4 pizza for a low concept where every member of the family and barkada can enjoy and share their own palatable flavors! The new flavor is available at over 100 Pizza Pedricos branches nationwide. Check out more details on Facebook by logging on to www.pizzapedricos.com for more exciting promos and surprises on this new Love Me Pizza campaign.